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THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM
OF THE FATHER
FORETOLD

Bible Quotations taken from—
Authorized or King James version of 1611
English revision of 1885, and also from
American revised version of 1901.

The
Glorious Kingdom
of the Father
Foretold

VIRGIE V. VAIL

1940

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INTRODUCTION

There can be no refuge in these perilous times for the world except to become informed and abide by the word of God, given in the past, and again in this New Day, which is the Day of God, the Sabbath of the Lord.

The human soul, endowed by God with capacity to think, and with a heart capable of responding to love can readily understand that prophecy could not have been given without divine guidance. Its having been given and now being in process of fulfillment certifies the Creator's love in warning all humanity, and thus sparing them from unnecessary suffering in their efforts to reach true wisdom, peace and happiness.

This book on the establishment of the glorious Kingdom of the Father is dedicated to those who recognize the final appearing of the Messiah of all religions as prophesied by each, and who desire to participate under His divine guidance in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Blessed are they who recognize the new day and conform to its spiritual and material requirements given in detail by Bahá'u'lláh, The Glory of God.

THE DAY OF GOD

Praise be to Thee, O God of Names and Creator of Heaven: Praise be to Thee, for Thou hast made known unto Thy servants Thy Day, wherein the River of Life streamed forth from the finger of Thy Generosity, and the Fountain of Revelation and Unity became manifest by Thy Manifestation, to all who are in Thy earth and heaven.

O God! This is a Day, the Light of which Thou hast sanctified above the sun and its effulgence. I testify that this Day is illumined by the Light of Thy Face and by the effulgence of the dawning lights of Thy Manifestation.

O Thou, My God, and the Beloved of my heart! With the name of this Day Thou hast adorned Thy Tablet, which is known only to Thee. Thou hast called it "The Day of God." Nothing is to be seen therein but Thy supreme Self, and naught is to be remembered save Thy sweetest Name. Wherefore, when He appeared, the foundations of all nations trembled, the learned were bewildered and the wise men were confounded, save those who came near unto Thee, took from the hand of Favor the pure wine of Thy Inspiration, and drank in Thy Name saying: "Praise be unto Thee, O Desire of the nations: Praise be to Thee, O Beloved of the hearts of the yearning!"

THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER FORETOLD

(FOREWORD)

Matt. 25:1 "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2. And five of them were wise and five were foolish."

A virgin is the symbol of purity, and morality. Therefore, the five foolish virgins represent people of good character, who are chaste, moral, ethical and righteous. Unfortunately for them however in these dangerous times, it is not enough to be good. Not every one who says Lord, Lord, shall be saved, for such people are like the foolish virgins foretold by Christ, as follows:

Matt. 25:11 "Afterward came also the other virgins saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, 'Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.'

13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Only the wise virgins who have oil in their lamps are ready for salvation. The empty lamp signifies the shell or form of religion, bereft of the oil of

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divine wisdom. Many people in this day are holding on to empty lamps. The oil of wisdom and light of divine guidance are absent in them.

Matt. 25:3 "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

A lamp may be likened to the Church where the light ought to be, but if the oil is not replenished, the lamp becomes empty. A faint light of a lamp almost spent induces sleep, and even without any oil, the foolish are satisfied with empty show. They have no oil because they have become negligent and are not alert to the signs of the times. Yet, they are pure virgins who are eventually lost because they lack the oil of the knowledge of God.

Only the wise virgins have oil as a result of their sincerity, study and forethought. They are those who seek the knowledge of God, and those who seek shall find. Therefore, the wise virgins enter in with the bridegroom who comes at midnight, when the world is at its darkest—and the time of greatest darkness is just before the dawn.

Matt. 25:6 "And at midnight, there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7. Then all the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

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8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9. But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you, but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."

Jesus' prophecy that the foolish virgins will have to buy for themselves does not necessarily mean that cash is to be paid, but it is well known that no one can receive the oil of wisdom without paying the price. That price is time taken for investigation, meditation and prayer. This is the requirement that the wise virgins will have met before the door is shut. It is impossible to meet such a requirement for another person. Each must seek divine wisdom individually. Only those who have an intense desire to know the reality of God, whose lamps are replenished through their love of the manifestation of God's Word, will be admitted into the Kingdom of the Father, for they are the ones who have foresight to fill their lamps with the oil of divine knowledge and guidance. They are the ones who, when at midnight, the cry was heard, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," were prepared to do so. The wise virgins are able to recognize the bridegroom, because they have the oil and light of understanding.

God has bequeathed to all the oil of divine guidance through prophecy, so that those who seek may

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know their Lord when he returns to earth. Prophecy is the spotlight which brings into clear relief the figure of the "Bridegroom" that all the good people, or virgins of the world, are expecting. A great many have already gone forth joyously to meet him.

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THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM
OF THE FATHER
FORETOLD

CHAPTER 1

PROPHECY

Isaiah 42:9 "Behold, the former things are come to pass and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them."

The fact that all great earthly events which direct the course of history and guide the laws of nature, have been foretold by the prophets of God, is proof of our heavenly Father's love and consideration, in order that His children may be informed in advance of the glorious plan which He has in store for those who love and trust Him. A prophetic sign from God has always been given to help souls recognize each of God's manifestations. Jesus Christ could thus be recognized through the pointing finger of prophecy. His forerunner was spoken of as "One crying in the wilderness." The manner of His birth was foretold, and the place where He should be born. His entrance into Jerusalem sitting on an ass was described beforehand. His betrayal and His death were fulfilled in the exact manner foretold. It is miraculous to tell of events before they happen, and there is certainty of their divine origin when these events take place, and become historical facts.

GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER—FORETOLD

List of Prophecies from the Old Testament, fulfilled by Christ, according to the New Testament narrations:

1. His forerunner spoken of as "One crying in the wilderness." (Isaiah 40:3. John 1:23)
2. The manner of His birth, a child born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14. Matt. 1:23)
3. The massacre of children by Herod at the time of Christ's birth. (Jer. 31:15. Matt. 2:16-18)
4. The place where He should be born. (Micah 5:2. Matt. 2:1)
5. Flight to Egypt as a child to fulfill prophecy. (Hosea 11:1. Matt. 2:15)
6. His mission foretold and fulfilled. (Isaiah 61:1. Luke 7:22)
7. His special mission as a light to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 49:6-7. Luke 2:32)
8. The miracles He performed. (Isaiah 6:8-10. John 12:37-41)
9. The parables He told. (Psalms 78:2. Matt. 13:35)
10. Despised, rejected and persecuted by men. (Psalms 22:7. Isaiah 53:3. Mark 15:28-29)
11. His entrance into Jerusalem sitting on an ass. (Zech. 9:9. Matt. 21:1-7)
12. His betrayal. (Zech. 11:12-13. Matt. 26:15. John 13:18-19. Acts 1:16-19)
13. Manner of suffering. (Psalms 22:16 and 69:21. Luke 23:36)
14. A bone of Him shall not be broken. (Psalms 34:20. John 19:36)
15. His death. (Zech. 12:10. John 19:24)
16. Numbered with transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12. Luke 22:37)

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17. The price of His burial. (Isaiah 53:9. Zech. 11:13. Matt. 27:7-9)
18. His resurrection. (Hosea 6:2. Matt. 28:6)
19. His ascension. (Psalms 110:1. Mark 16:19)

There are two advents foretold by the prophets—the first advent in humiliation, and the second when the expounder of God's word establishes His glorious kingdom on earth. The reason for belief in prophecies concerning the second advent is that all things predicted in the first advent were fulfilled. Therefore, the predictions in both the Old and New Testaments which have not yet happened, shall certainly come to pass. It has been reiterated again and again by all the prophets of God from the beginning of time in terms not uncertain, that the Kingdom of the Father in due time would be established on earth. For example:

Psalms 72:8. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.

12. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight."

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This is the day of fulfillment, the consummation of all of the prophecies regarding the Kingdom of the Father on earth. Prophecy has now been fulfilled. The Kingdom of God, the Father, is already prepared on earth, and waiting.

2 Peter 1:21 "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Sceptics and scoffers deny the possibility that God's kingdom can be established on earth, as foretold.

2 Peter 3:3 "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts.

4. And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

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9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The denial of prophecy is equivalent to loss of hope in the millennium and the thousand years of peace when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the glorious Kingdom of the Father and of His son.

Christ verified the warnings of former prophets with a description of the havoc and travail which would be necessary in order to change the world into a paradise through the spiritual bounty of God, and He often spoke of the establishment of the Glorious Kingdom of the Father on earth, which every eye would behold, and now is recognized by the elect, as a true statement. In every age, people are slow to realize the truth of the words of God's prophets.

Jer. 5:12. "They have belied the Lord and said it is not he; neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword nor famine.

13. And the prophets shall become wind, for the word is not in them; thus it shall be done unto them.

14. Therefore thus saith the Lord, God of Hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold I will make my word in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

24. Neither say they in their heart, let us now fear the Lord, our God that giveth rain, both in the former and the latter in his season; he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

25. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

31. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Prophecy is conditional. God is long-suffering, and His plan is pliable. Repentance and prayer signify that man has turned his face to the light of God's guidance, receiving mercy and forgiveness and averting tragedy. Prophecy clearly shows that obedience to the will of God is rewarded, in both this life and in the life to come. The wicked are first warned, and if this warning is not heeded, the punishment is sure to follow in exact accordance with prophecy. Reward and punishment as conditional upon man's own choice, is more fully explained in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, as follows:

"Know thou that all men have been created in the nature made by God, the Guardian, the Self-subsisting. Unto each one hath been prescribed a preordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition . . . God hath in that Book, [the Bayán] and by His behest, decreed as lawful whatsoever He hath pleased to decree, and hath, through the power of His sovereign might forbidden whatsoever He elected to forbid . . . Men, however, have wittingly broken His law. Is such a behaviour to be attributed to God, or to their proper selves? Be fair in your judgment. Every good thing is of God, and

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every evil thing is from yourselves. Will ye not comprehend? This same truth hath been revealed in all the Scriptures, if ye be of them that understand. Every act ye meditate is as clear to Him as is that act when already accomplished. There is none other God besides Him. His is all creation and its empire. All stands revealed before Him; all is recorded in His holy and hidden Tablets. This fore-knowledge of God, however, should not be regarded as having caused the actions of men, just as your own previous knowledge that a certain event is to occur, or your desire that it should happen, is not and can never be the reason for its occurrence." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 149, 150)

Therefore it behooves men to consider the familiar words of Isaiah:

Isaiah 55:6 "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;

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11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it."

CHAPTER 2

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

Mark 4:26 "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

27. And should sleep, and rise night and day and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Civilization has now progressed to the time of the harvest. The idea of progressive revelation is likewise similarly explained in the Bahá'í teachings:

"The religion of God is the One Religion, and all the prophets have taught it, but it is a living and a growing thing, not lifeless and unchanging. In the teaching of Moses we see the Bud; in that of Christ the Flower; in that of Bahá'u'lláh the Fruit. The flower does not destroy the bud, nor does the fruit destroy the flower. It destroys not, but fulfils. The bud-scales must fall in order that the flower may bloom, and the petals must fall that the fruit may grow and ripen. Were the bud-scales and the petals wrong or useless, then, that they had to be discarded? Nay, both in their time were right and necessary;

without them there could have been no fruit. So it is with the various prophetic teachings; their externals change from age to age, but each revelation is the fulfilment of its predecessors; they are not separate nor incongruous, but different stages in the life history of the One Religion, which has in turn been revealed as seed, as bud and as flower, and now enters on the stage of fruition." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 152)

A great stumbling block in the way of religious unity is the difference between the revelation brought by each prophet. Earlier, imperfect ideas are by the Grace of God replaced from time to time by more adequate conceptions, taught by the early Christians as follows:

1 Cor. 3:2. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."

Heb. 5:13. "For everyone that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe."

Christ also knew that mankind has not yet reached maturity when He said:

John 16:12. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

After Christ, there was yet to be another divine manifestation of God before the time of the harvest:

John 14:16 "And I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another comforter that He may abide with you forever."

Titus 2:13 "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Bahá'u'lláh says: "O people! Words are revealed according to capacity so that the beginners may make progress. The milk must be given according to measure so that the babe of the world may enter into the Realm of Grandeur and be established in the Court of Unity." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 150)

"It is milk that strengthens the babe so that it can digest more solid food later on. To say that because one prophet is right in giving a certain teaching at a certain time, therefore another prophet must be wrong who gives a different teaching at a different time, is like saying that because milk is the best food for the new-born babe, therefore, milk and nothing but milk should be the food of the grown man also, and to give any other diet would be wrong!" (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 151)

Heb. 5:12-13. 1 Peter 2:2.

Just as nature is renewed each spring by a quickening power, so is the divine spirit in man revived by God from time to time. Christ quickened and fulfilled the teachings of Moses, as Moses foretold He would do:

Deut. 18:15 "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

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18. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

Even as Moses foretold the coming of His successor, so Christ foretold of the One who would follow Him:

John 15:26 "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me."

John 16:14 "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

When God renews His outpourings of spiritual law from age to age through His human manifestations who come to earth for that express purpose, the vibrations of the earth are changed, enabling all creation to manifest more fully the attributes of the divine. Therefore, new and higher commands are given.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you; that ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye also love one another."

In order to give this new teaching and thus revivify the teachings of Moses, it was necessary that a new Manifestation of God appear. Spring would not be

spring if new leaves and flowers did not appear. Therefore, God sent a new teacher to mankind in the form of His Son. Yet some prefer to claim that the law given by Moses and the teachings of Christ are sufficient for all time, and that there could be nothing of any importance added.

In the present new era, many new and higher teachings are given by Bahá'u'lláh, for example:

"Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself; such an one is of the people of Bahá."

On the subject of progressive revelation, the writings of Bahá'u'lláh contain the following:

"Contemplate with thine inward eye the chain of successive Revelations that hath linked the Manifestation of Adam with that of the Báb. I testify before God that each one of these Manifestations hath been sent down through the operation of the Divine Will and Purpose, that each hath been the bearer of a specific Message, that each hath been entrusted with a divinely revealed Book and been commissioned to unravel the mysteries of a mighty Tablet. The measure of the Revelation with which every one of them hath been identified had been definitely fore-ordained. This verily, is a token of Our favor unto them, if ye be of those that comprehend this truth. . . . And when this process of progressive Revelation culminated in the stage at which His peerless, His most sacred and exalted Countenance was to be unveiled to men's eyes, He chose to hide His own Self behind a thousand veils, lest profane and mortal eyes discover His glory. . . ." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 74, 75)

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW ERA

Matt. 9:16 "No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out and the bottles perish, but they put new wine into new bottles and both are preserved."

God does not put the new wine of His Revelation into old vessels and outworn customs of a former dispensation, and thus try to fit His new revelation into old human standards, for God Himself is the standard by which "He doeth that which He pleaseth." God does not patch that which humanity has outgrown. He bestows new garments upon His creation to fit their needs. This time the knowledge of God is destined to cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea, and everyone shall know and praise the Lord, from the least even to the greatest. Instead of various folds and various shepherds, there will be "one fold and one shepherd." As soon as humanity decides to co-operate with God's plan and turn their faces towards His Beauty, universal peace will be the result. Blessed are the peace-bringers. Bahá'u'lláh teaches that if religion becomes the

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source of antagonism and strife, the absence of religion is to be preferred. Religion is meant to be the quickening life of the body-politic; if it be the cause of strife and warfare, its absence would be better. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the Glorious Father, Bahá'u'lláh, points out the remedy, which everyone except the heedless and reckless will follow:

"Therefore in this day the divine teachings must be sought, for they are the only remedies for the conditions of the world of humanity. The purpose of a remedy is to heal and cure. If it produce worse symptoms, its absence or discontinuance is preferable."

Rev. 21:5 "And He that sat upon the throne said 'Behold I make all things new,' and he said unto me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.'"

Therefore when 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises that the divine teachings be sought, he refers to those teachings applicable to the new era, as Isaiah also counselled:

Isaiah 42:10 "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles and the inhabitants thereof."

Psalms 33:3 "Sing unto Him a new song."

The millennium will be the last and best chapter in all history. It is more important to know the end than to know the beginning. The old must be superseded by the new. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. Progress is ever upward and must be

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attained, while the starting point is left behind. God's word, the Bible, gives only a short summary of creation, the greater part being prophetic, referring to the future, when the purpose of creation is consummated.

Isaiah 65:17 "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

Isaiah 43:18 "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

19. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth, shall ye not know it?"

The fulfillment of the above prophecies has been announced for the new era into which the world is now entering:

"‘Soon,’ Bahá'u'lláh's own words proclaim it, ‘will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth and is the Knower of things unseen.’ ‘By myself,’ He solemnly asserts, ‘the day is approaching when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new Order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful over all things.’ ‘The world's equilibrium,’ He explains, ‘hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this Most Great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System, the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.’ ‘The signs of impending convulsions and chaos,’ He warns the peoples of the

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world, 'can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective.' " (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 161, 162)

CHAPTER 4

THE LORD'S RETURN—THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." (John 14:3)

In the first chapter of Acts we read that the disciples were told at the ascension of Jesus: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Because of this, many Christians expect that when the Son of Man comes "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" they shall see in bodily form the very Jesus who walked the streets of Jerusalem two thousand years ago. The Jews of Christ's time had just such ideas about the return of Elias, but Jesus explained their error, showing that the prophecy that "Elias must first come" was fulfilled, not by the return of the body of the former Elias, but in the person of John the Baptist who came "in the spirit and power of Elias." The "return" of Elias at the time of Christ, as well as when he returns in the present era means the appearance of another person, born of other parents,

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but inspired by God with the same spirit and power. The return of Christ, in like manner, will be accomplished by the appearance of another person with a physical body, but showing forth the Spirit and Power of the same God.

John 10:17 "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Bahá'u'lláh explains that the "coming again" of Christ was fulfilled in the advent of the Báb and in His own coming. He says:

"Consider the sun. Were it to say now 'I am the sun of yesterday,' it would speak the truth. And should it, bearing the sequence of time in mind, claim to be other than the sun, it still would speak the truth. In like manner, if it be said that all the days are but one and the same, it is correct and true. And if it be said, with respect to their particular names and designations, that they differ, that again is true. For though they are the same, yet one doth recognize in each a separate designation, a specific attribute, a particular character. Conceive accordingly the distinction, variation, and unity characteristic of the various Manifestations of holiness, that thou mayest comprehend the allusions made by the creator of all names and attributes to the mysteries of distinction and unity, and discover the answer to

thy question as to why that everlasting Beauty should have, at sundry times, called Himself by different names and titles." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pages 21-22)

The days of understanding of the prophecies were to begin sometime after the Lord's return, and the understanding was to increase thereafter. Prophecies which refer to the "time of the end" the "last days," the coming of the "Lord of Hosts," and of the "Everlasting Father," do not refer to the advent of Jesus Christ, but to that of the Father, in the latter days, Christ and the Father being one and the same. Christ declared "I and my Father are one."

Acts 3:19 "times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ;

20. And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

This time of refreshing shows clearly that Christ's disciples were aware of the coming of another powerful manifestation of God in the dispensation following the Christian era upon the "restitution of all things" and "after the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled."

Acts 15:14 "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.

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15. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written :

16. 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.

17. 'That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things'."

The coming again of the Lord is for the purpose of teaching all things in fuller measure than ever before, and bringing to remembrance the teachings of Christ, that the residue of men may seek after the Lord. The following discourse is often misinterpreted:

John 16:7 "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

8. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

9. Of sin, because they believe not on me. [See Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the Jews, reproving them for disbelief in God's personal manifestations, and in His Word, Jesus Christ.]

10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more :

11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. [This refers to the Day of Judgment, not to the Day of Pentecost.]

12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

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13. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into *all truth*; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will shew you things to come."

The above indicates that the "Comforter" is also the "Judge" reproving the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. This is not the work of Christ, but of the One to follow Him as it was Christ's express mission to save the world. Christ speaks of the "Comforter" not as "I," but as "He." The word "He" is used eleven times in this discourse by Christ, indicating the coming of the Holy Ghost in the form of a man rather than the coming of an invisible spirit, as claimed by some. (See chapter on False Christs.) Finite man is not equipped to investigate the invisible realms, and even forbidden to exceed human limitation in this way, as it is unnatural and leads to serious consequences. Human beings can only comprehend spiritual verities accurately as they relate to experiences of human life. Therefore, from the beginning, throughout the course of history, God has always given His messages of guidance to humanity through a human being, not hidden from the sight of men—one who teaches by His example. From Him humanity may learn of the love and laws of God, and not grope blindly, each in a different way, having no guide or standard. If God required mankind to learn from an invisible Holy Ghost, He would have done so from the beginning, and Christ's teachings might have

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been given from the spiritual plane without His taking the form and likeness of man—but no, He humbled Himself, was made in the likeness of man, and became obedient unto death, even the death upon the cross. So will His second coming be in like manner. Those who claim He shall come in the spirit instead of in the flesh have the spirit of Anti-Christ. (See chapter on False Christs.)

In order that there be no doubt of The Father's coming to earth with divine authority to judge the earth, and to establish His Kingdom, Christ told this story, indicating the precise object of His coming:

Matt. 21:33 "There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

34. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen to receive his fruits.

35. And the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another and stoned another.

36. Again he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them in like manner.

37. But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him and take his inheritance.

39. And they took him and came forth out of the vineyard and killed him.

40. When therefore the *Lord of the vineyard shall come* what will he do unto those husbandmen?

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41. They said unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42. Jesus said unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner? This was from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43. Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

May it be hoped that the unspecified nation, bringing forth fruits worthy of the Kingdom of God may be the United States of America, the melting pot of all nations.

In Verse 40, it will be noticed that after the Son and heir of the vineyard was slain, instead of sending His son to the vineyard again, The Lord Himself shall come as judge of the husbandmen, bringing with Him reward and punishment. Although at first men shall reject this sure foundation as the corner stone for the establishment of peace and the Kingdom of God on earth, yet it shall become the head of the corner.

Words of comfort and assurance from the pen of the King of Glory Himself proclaim with certainty that the Father has already manifested on earth, as foretold :

" 'The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over

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the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.'

'Call out to Zion, O Carmel,' writes Bahá'u'lláh, 'and announce the joyful tidings: 'He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed . . . Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven—the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favored of God, the pure in heart and the company of the most exalted angels.' 'I am the One,' He in another connection affirms, 'Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned.' 'The glory of Sinai hath hastened to circle round the Day-Spring of this Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the voice of the Son of God is heard proclaiming: 'Bestir yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye towards Him.' Carmel hath in this day hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: 'The promise of all ages is now fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy writ of God, the Beloved, the Most High, is made manifest.' " (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 104, 105)

CHAPTER 5

COMING IN THE CLOUDS

Matt. 24:30 "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet—"

Rev. 1:7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

The following passages from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh clearly interpret the meaning of "clouds."

"It is evident that the changes brought about in every Dispensation constitute the dark clouds that intervene between the eye of man's understanding and the Divine Luminary which shineth forth from the day spring of the Divine Essence. Consider how men for generations have been blindly imitating their fathers, and have been trained according to such ways and manners as have been laid down by the dictates of their Faith. Were these men, therefore, to discover suddenly that a Man, Who hath been living in their midst, Who, with respect to every human limitation, hath been their equal, had

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risen to abolish every established principle imposed by their Faith—principles by which for centuries they have been disciplined, and every opposer and denier of which they have come to regard as infidel, profligate and wicked—they would of a certainty be veiled and hindered from acknowledging His truth. Such things are as ‘clouds’ that veil the eyes of those whose inner being hath not tasted the Salsibil of detachment, nor drunk from the Kawther of the knowledge of God. Such men, when acquainted with those circumstances, become so veiled that, without the least question, they pronounce the Manifestation of God as infidel, and sentence Him to death. You must have heard of such things taking place all down the ages, and are now observing them in these days.

It behooveth us, therefore, to make the utmost endeavor, that, by God’s invisible assistance, these dark veils, these clouds of Heaven-sent trials, may not hinder us from beholding the beauty of His shining Countenance, and that we may recognize Him, only by His own Self.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, pages 26, 27)

“By the term ‘clouds’ is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men . . . These ‘clouds’ signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other

things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as 'clouds.'" (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pages 71-72)

"Even as the clouds prevent the eyes of men from beholding the sun, so do these things hinder the souls of men from recognizing the light of the divine Luminary. . . . As these holy Persons were subject to such needs and wants, the people were, consequently, lost in the wilderness of misgivings and doubts . . . How, they wondered, could such a person be sent down from God, assert His ascendancy over all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and claim Himself to be the goal of all creation,—even as He hath said: 'But for Thee, I would have not created all that are in heaven and on earth'—and yet be subject to such trivial things? You must undoubtedly have been informed of the tribulations, the poverty, the ills, and the degradation that have befallen every Prophet of God and His companions. You must have heard how the heads of their followers were sent as presents unto different cities, how grievously they were hindered from that whereunto they were commanded. Each and every one of them fell a prey to the hands of the enemies of His Cause, and had to suffer whatsoever they decreed." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pages 72, 73)

"The day is approaching when the intervening clouds will have been completely dissipated, when the light of the words, 'All honor belongeth unto God and unto them that love Him' will have appeared, as manifest as the sun, above the horizon of the Will of the Almighty." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 306)

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1 Thess. 4:16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Bahá'u'lláh writes regarding these and similar passages in the Book of Kitáb-i-Íqán, as follows:

"The term 'heaven' denoteth loftiness and exaltation, inasmuch as it is the seat of the revelation of those Manifestations of Holiness, the Day-springs of ancient glory. These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence. Without feet they tread the path of the spirit, and without wings they rise unto the exalted heights of space, and at every moment traverse the kingdoms of the visible and invisible." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 67)

"By 'angels' is meant those who, reinforced by the power of the spirit, have consumed, with the fire of the love of God, all human traits and limitations, and have clothed themselves with the attributes of the most exalted Beings and of the Cherubim . . ." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 78)

"Were the prophecies recorded in the Gospel to be literally fulfilled; were Jesus, Son of Mary, accompanied by angels, to descend from the visible heaven

upon the clouds; who would dare to disbelieve, who would dare to reject the truth, and wax disdainful? Nay, such consternation would immediately seize all the dwellers of the earth that no soul would feel able to utter a word, much less to reject or accept the truth." (*Kitáb-i-Īqán*, pages 80, 81)

It is evident that if "clouds" were those we see with the physical eye, and which can only obscure the physical sun, that there would be no need nor virtue in human beings attaining the quality of discrimination, or to discern anything with the eye of intelligence. Those who have not yet reached maturity may look and wait for Christ to appear in the physical clouds, but Christ warned that no such signs would be forthcoming.

Matt. 12:38 "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

In harmony with Christ's answer above quoted, God's Divine mouth-piece for the present mature age of the world, has written :

"The All-Glorious hath decreed these very things, that are contrary to the desires of wicked men, to be the touchstone and standard whereby He proveth His servants, that the just may be known from the wicked, and the faithful distinguished from the infidel." (*Kitáb-i-Īqán*, page 76)

CHAPTER 6

WITH POWER

Isaiah 45:22 "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.

23. I have sworn by myself; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear."

This prophecy being repeated in the New Testament (Philippians 2:10) indicates the fulfillment to be in the future. We all know that every knee did not bow to Christ, but worshippers of God and His Manifestations know that this prophecy will be fulfilled after the heedless ones, the drunkards and the oppressors, the deceitful and ambitious have been changed by a righteous judgment.

Isaiah 59:1 "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear.

2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."

Some may feel that this age of the world is so very good that they prefer to see no change, but the

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best of the kingdoms of this world is as nothing to the least of the things of God's kingdom.

I Cor. 2:9 "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

The return of God, the Father, may be difficult for some people to understand, but when one contemplates the great blessings to be bestowed upon all who heed the Word of God, there should be a sense of joy and thankfulness that He who is mighty to save, has appeared.

Luke 4:32 "And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power."

All the successive prophets of God speak with power and authority as testified in all the scriptures. On the subject of power, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

"How false is that which the Jews have imagined! How can the hand of Him, Who is the King in truth, Who caused the countenance of Moses to be made manifest, and conferred upon Him the robe of Prophethood—how can the hand of such a One be chained and fettered? How can He be conceived as powerless to raise up yet another Messenger after Moses? Behold the absurdity of their saying; how far it hath strayed from the path of knowledge and understanding! Observe how in this Day also, all these people have occupied themselves with such foolish absurdities. For over a thousand years they

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have been reciting this verse, and unwittingly pronouncing their censure against the Jews, utterly unaware that they themselves, openly and privily, are voicing the sentiments and belief of the Jewish people! Thou art surely aware of their idle contention, that all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the day springs of eternal holiness no Sun shall rise again, that the Ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the Tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest. Such is the measure of the understanding of these small-minded, contemptible people. These people have imagined that the flow of God's all-encompassing grace and plenteous mercies, the cessation of which no mind can contemplate, has been halted. From every side they have risen and girded up the loins of tyranny, and exerted the utmost endeavor to quench with the bitter waters of their vain fancy the flame of God's Burning Bush, oblivious that the globe of power shall, within its own mighty stronghold, protect the Lamp of God." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 23, 24)

Daniel 2:21 "And he changeth the times and the seasons. He removeth kings and setteth up kings."
Daniel 4:25 "He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

There is a tendency inherent in rulers to credit themselves with power which has actually been given to them by God as a bounty, and with which they, themselves, had little to do. For example, it is recorded in Isaiah 14:5, and also as follows:

Daniel 4:30, 31 “The king spake and said ‘Is this not great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was in the King’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven . . .’ The kingdom is departed from thee.”

Daniel 2:44 “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Rev. 11:15 “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

The following prayers acknowledging the power of God have been revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, because has it not been prophesied that God, our creator, will put a new song in our mouths, “even praise unto our God.” (See Psalms 40.)

“O Lord my God! . . . How great is Thy power! How exalted Thy sovereignty! How lofty Thy might! How excellent Thy majesty! How supreme is Thy grandeur—a grandeur which He Who is Thy Manifestation hath made known and where-with Thou hast invested Him as a sign of Thy generosity and bountiful favor. I bear witness, O my God, that through Him Thy most resplendent signs have been uncovered, and Thy mercy hath encompassed the entire creation.” . . . “Blessed is the man

that turneth towards Thee, and woe betide him who standeth aloof from Thee, who denieth Thee and repudiath Thy signs in this Revelation. . . . No God is there besides Thee, the powerful, the all-Glorious." (*Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 294, 295, 296 and 301)

"O my Lord! Power hast Thou to do what Thou pleasest. All else but Thee are impotent before the revelations of Thy might, are as lost in the face of the evidences of Thy wealth, are as nothing when compared with the manifestations of Thy transcendent sovereignty, and are destitute of all strength when face to face with the signs and tokens of Thy power. What refuge is there besides Thee, O my Lord, to which I can flee, and where is there a haven to which I can hasten? Nay, the power of Thy might beareth me witness! No protector is there but Thee; no place to flee to except Thee, no refuge to seek save Thee." (*Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 82)

All the other prophets have likewise acknowledged the mighty power of God. A few of these are quoted for comparison:

Isaiah 40:28 "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, The Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding.

29. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.

30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.

31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

Isaiah 45:5 "I am the Lord, and there is none else. There is no God besides me. I girded thee though thou hast not known me.

6. That they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

7. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord do all these things.

8. Drop down, ye heavens from above and let the sky pour down righteousness, let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together. I, the Lord have created it.

9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou?"

Isaiah 45:11 "Thus sayeth the Lord the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ask me of things to come concerning my sons and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me.

12. I have made the earth and created man upon it. I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens and all their hosts have I commanded.

13. I have raised him up in righteousness and *I WILL DIRECT ALL HIS WAYS.*"

Psalms 66:1 "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands,

2. Sing forth honor to his name; make his praise Glorious.

3. Say unto God how terrible art Thou in Thy

works! Through the greatness of thy power, shall thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee;

4. All the earth shall worship Thee and sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy name."

That the cause of God in this radiant century brings into operation the power foretold and extolled by all of the prophets of the past, can be briefly glimpsed when considering a few of the writings of the Blessed Perfection, as Bahá'u'lláh is sometimes called:

"How vast is the tabernacle of the Cause of God! It hath overshadowed all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and will, ere long, gather together the whole of mankind beneath its shelter." (*Gleanings from Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 92)

"There is a power in this Cause, a mysterious power, far, far, far away from the ken of men and angels. That invisible power is the source of all these outward activities. It moves the hearts. It rends the mountains. It administers the complicated affairs of the Cause. It inspires the friends. It dashes into a thousand pieces all the forces of opposition. It creates new spiritual worlds. This is a mystery of the Kingdom of Abhá." (*Bahá'í Scriptures*, para. 622)

"All praise be to God Who hath adorned the world with an ornament, and arrayed it with a vesture, of which it can be despoiled by no earthly power, however mighty its battalions, however vast its wealth, however profound its influence. Say: the essence of all power is God's, the highest and the last End of all creation. The source of all majesty is God's, the Object of the adoration of all that is

in the heavens and all that is on the earth. Such forces as have their origin in this world of dust are, by their very nature, unworthy of consideration.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 341)

CHAPTER 7

WITH GREAT GLORY

Isaiah 40:5 "And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Matt. 25:31 "Then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory."

Matt. 16:27 "For the Son of man shall come in the Glory of His Father with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works."

Christ is here speaking of the coming of a future manifestation of God whom he terms "The Son of man." Christ was generally spoken of as the "Son of God."

Col. 3:4 "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory."

The glorious event which has been continually promised has become an actual fact in the appearance of the great glory of His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh who announces the tidings of His appearance, as follows:

"O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: 'He who is the Best-

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Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the Glory of God's Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise'. Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover; 'Behold, your Well-beloved hath come among men!' and to the messengers of the Monarch of love impart the tidings: 'Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His Glory!' O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 319, 320)

"He hath, verily manifested a glory such as none in the whole creation hath witnessed, inasmuch as He hath arisen to proclaim in person His Cause unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 75)

1 Peter 5:4 "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The "Chief Shepherd" referred to above does not refer back to Christ, as He had already appeared, but does refer to the return of the Holy Spirit who will again come to establish His glorious Kingdom.

All nations shall worship and glorify God, according to the following prediction:

WITH GREAT GLORY

Psalms 86:9 "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name."

Of course, "all nations" will include the Jews. This is repeatedly described in the Old Testament. For example:

Ezek. 43:2 "And behold the Glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East, and His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory.

4. And the Glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the Gate, whose prospect is toward the East.

5. So the spirit took me up and brought me into the inner court, and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house.

7. And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and my Holy name, shall the House of Israel no more defile."

As a matter of interest, the name, Bahá'u'lláh in Persian, translated means "Glory of God." Therefore, it is evident that in this era, upon the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh, prophecies of the coming of the King of Glory are being fulfilled. David has prophesied this glorious coming in the following psalm:

Psalms 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.

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2. For He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods.

3. Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His Holy place?

4. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of His salvation.

6. This is the generation of them that seek Him; that seek Thy face O Jacob.

7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

8. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

10. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory."

Christ came in humility. The question is, "Who is the King of Glory?" The answer is to be found in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

"In the Book of Isaiah, it is written: 'Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty.' No man that meditateth upon this verse can fail to recognize the greatness of this Cause, or doubt the exalted character of this Day—the Day of God Himself. This same verse is followed by these words: 'And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day'. This is

the Day which the pen of the Most High hath glorified in all the holy Scriptures. There is no verse in them that doth not declare the glory of His Holy Name and no Book that doth not testify unto the loftiness of this most exalted theme." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 13)

Daniel 7:13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Bahá'u'lláh declares that His is the Ancient Glory which is in exact accord with the prophecy of Daniel:

"O thou who art waiting, tarry no longer, for He is come. Behold His Tabernacle and His Glory dwelling therein. It is the Ancient Glory, with a new manifestation." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 30)

CHAPTER 8

HUMAN HELPLESSNESS

Jer. 17:5 "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

6. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness in a salt land and not inhabited.

7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is."

The following gives a comparison between worldly knowledge and divine wisdom:

1 Cor. 1:20 "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

1 Cor. 3:19 "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

21. Therefore, let no man glory in men."

Self-confidence and proud reliance in the abundance of wealth and strength of armaments characterizes rulers of nations. Their defiant independence proclaims that they have no need of God, all of which the prophets foresaw.

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Isaiah 2:7 "Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.

8. Their land also is full of idols, they worship the work of their own hands that which their own fingers have made.

10. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust for fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of His Majesty.

11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

12. For the Day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.

17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

18. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

19. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship to the moles and to the bats.

21. To go into the clefts of the rocks and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

22. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

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Acts 5:29 "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men'."

If men try to maintain the program of other men instead of the program of God, bombs will be dropping everywhere. The only safe place, as the Bible says, will be in the rocks and clefts of mountains. As soon as humanity recognizes God's complete and perfect program for the world, which has already been established on earth by Bahá'u'lláh, then peace shall be speedily agreed to among the nations. This will at the same time transform the hearts of men, making them happy and willing to sing eternal praises to God. Peace on earth at this time cannot be realized in any other way.

Psalms 19:7 "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

Psalms 119:105 "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

The above quotations taken from the Bible clearly show that the words of God's manifestations illuminate the path of all mankind for they contain the perfect laws of God. Bahá'u'lláh has enjoined upon all men to observe the inadequacy of human leadership and the urgent need that all mankind turn their faces to God. The wisdom of the following utterances testify to the divinity of their origin:

"O, ye the elected representatives of the people in every land: Take ye counsel together, and let your

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concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof, if ye be of them that scan heedfully. Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

“We behold it, in this day, at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage, much less recognize a Revelation so bewildering and challenging as this. And whenever any one of them hath striven to improve its condition, his motive hath been his own gain, whether confessedly so or not; and the unworthiness of this motive hath limited his power to heal or cure.

“That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, and all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 254, 255)

“Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you

unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed . . . lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.

“By the righteousness of God! It is not Our wish to lay hands on your kingdoms. Our mission is to seize and possess the hearts of men. Upon them the eyes of Bahá are fastened. To this testifieth the Kingdom of Names, could ye but comprehend it. Whoso followeth his Lord, will renounce the world and all that is therein; how much greater, then, must be the detachment of Him Who holdeth so august a station! Forsake your palaces, and haste ye to gain admittance into His Kingdom. This, indeed, will profit you both in this world and the next. To this testifieth the Lord of the realm on high, did ye but know it.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 211, 212)

“Rememberest thou not God's warning uttered in times past, that thou mayest be of them that heed His warning? He said, and He, verily, speaketh the truth: ‘From it (earth) have We created you, and unto it will We return you, and out of it will We bring you forth a second time. This is what God ordained unto all them that dwell on earth, be they high or low. It behooveth not, therefore, him who was created from dust, who will return unto it, and will again be brought forth out of it, to swell with pride before God, and before His loved ones, to proudly scorn them, and be filled with disdainful arrogance. Nay, rather it behooveth thee and those

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like thee to submit yourselves to them Who are the Manifestations of the unity of God, and to defer humbly to the faithful, who have forsaken their all for the sake of God, and have detached themselves from the things which engross men's attention, and lead them astray from the path of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Thus do we send down upon you that which shall profit you and profit them that have placed their whole trust and confidence in their Lord." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 231, 232)

CHAPTER 9

BREAD OF LIFE

Luke 14:15 "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, He said unto Him 'Blessed is He that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.'"

The story told by Jesus (Luke 14:16) describes the conditions which will prevail in the world when the time comes for the establishment of the Kingdom of the Father who giveth the true bread from heaven.

John 6:32 "Then Jesus said unto them. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Those who make excuses in order to reject the true bread of life from the Father, when He comes, will have no share in the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. As Christ's kingdom and the Father's kingdom signify the same place, the same heavenly food, the same bread of life is served.

BREAD OF LIFE

Luke 22 :29 “And I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto me.

30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

John 6:35 “And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains these Bible verses in this way:

“Notice that ‘coming to him’ he expresses as eating, and ‘belief in him’ as drinking. Then it is evident and established that the celestial food is the divine bounties, the spiritual splendours, the heavenly teachings, the universal meaning of Christ. To eat is to draw near to Him, and to drink is to believe in Him. For Christ had an elemental body and a celestial form. The elemental body was crucified, but the heavenly form is living and eternal, and the cause of everlasting life; the first was the human nature, and the second is the divine nature . . . This bread which came down from heaven was the divine body of Christ, his spiritual elements, which the disciples ate, and through which they gained eternal life.” (*Some Answered Questions*, pages 113, 114)

John 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

Matt. 4:3 “And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. But He answered and said, It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Again 'Abdu'l-Bahá interprets the words of the New Testament :

"It is evident that the heavenly bread did not signify this material bread, but rather the divine nourishment of the spiritual body of Christ, the divine graces and heavenly perfections of which his disciples partook, and with which they became filled. . . .

"when Christ blessed the bread and gave it to his disciples saying 'This is my body' and gave grace to them, he was with them in person. . . . He was not transformed into bread and wine; if he had been turned into bread and wine, he could not have remained with the disciples in body, in person and in presence.

"Then it is clear that the bread and wine were symbols which signified I have given you my bounties and perfections, and when you have received this bounty, you have gained eternal life and have partaken of your share and your portion of the heavenly nourishment." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 114).

1 Cor. 11:26 "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till He come."

Luke 22:16 "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.

18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the

fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come."

Now that the Heavenly Father has come to establish His Kingdom on earth, we can repeat with Christ, "Blessed is He that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God."

The following passage contains the outstanding promise that the Lord shall gird Himself and make them sit down to meat and shall come and serve them.

Luke 12:35 "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning;

36. And be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him.

37. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them.

38. And if He shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through.

40. Be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

To whom does Jesus refer, if not to Bahá'u'lláh who came in an unexpected hour less than one hun-

dred years ago, quietly, as a thief, stealing the hearts of men, and bringing the bread of life. His purpose is to establish the glorious Kingdom of the Father on earth as it is in heaven, which is steadily drawing all men to it, the Father knowing our needs in advance. The beauty of His Word is our food, and the Water of Life which He brings by His presence is our drink.

“O my God, Make Thy beauty to be my food, and let Thy Presence be my drink; let my trust be in Thy Will and my deeds according to Thy commands. Make my service acceptable to Thee, and my actions a praise to Thee; let my help come only from Thee and ordain my home to be Thy mansion, holy and sanctified. Thou art the precious, the ever-present, the beloved of all hearts.” (Prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh)

Bahá'ís do not observe the Eucharist, but instead eat at their nineteen-day feasts, the “bread of life” of the beauty of divine bestowals and heavenly perfections, and drink the wine of nearness to and belief in His Holy Presence.

Rev. 3:20 “Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

CHAPTER 10

NEW NAMES

Rev. 3:12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name."

It is quite evident from the above that a new name is destined for the elect of God at the consummation of the prophetic cycle which began with Adam, when the old heaven and the old earth shall pass away, and a new order shall be spread out in its stead. Therefore, the following passage often quoted by Christians, refers only to the duration of the dispensation of Jesus Christ:

Acts 4:12 "For there is none other name under heaven among men whereby we must be saved."

When all things are made new, there is a new name, which naturally supersedes the old. Inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh shall, in Christ's own words "testify of me" (John 15:26) and "shall glorify me" (John 16:14), to exalt and praise Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of

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God, as the return of Christ (Philippians 2:11) is to exalt and praise Christ. A true believer in Christ acknowledges the power of God to fulfill the prophecies and prayers of Christ.

John 12:28 "Father glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The Bahá'í Faith is the fulfillment and completion of all the ancient faiths. The Jews await the Messiah, the Christians the return of Christ, the Muslims the Mahdí, the Buddhists the fifth Buddha, the Zoroastrians Shah Bahram, the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna, and the Atheists—a better social organization: "Bahá'u'lláh" is the name chosen, not by any one of these religions of the past, but is the new name which the mouth of the Lord Himself hath spoken, as prophesied:

Isaiah 62:2 "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."

By using a new name, rivalries, enmities and jealousies which have existed between religions of past ages, are destroyed, for the new name represents all of them universally. God's Manifestation for the age of peace on earth comes to reconcile all religions in their primitive purity, and set them free from the acquired conceptions of unessential dogmas and rites.

NEW NAMES

Zech. 14:9 "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his Name One."

One of the requirements outlined by His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh for the new day is that there shall be a universal language in addition to the mother tongue. Thus, in this new era the Lord's name will be one throughout the world. During the Christian dispensation, the name of the Lord was not one name, but He was called by as many names as there were languages. History does not recount a time in the past when the Lord was king over all the earth, nor tell of a time when the Name of the Lord was great among the Gentiles from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same as stated in Malachi 1:11. Therefore, we must look to the immediate future for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Matt. 16:27 "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with his angels."

The title "Bahá'u'lláh" is Arabic, meaning "Glory of God," and this is the title used by all of the Hebrew prophets for the Promised One who is to appear in the last days. Thus in the 40th chapter of Isaiah it is definitely stated that He who is the "Glory of the Lord" shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. The entire passage, therefore, refers to the present time, since Bahá'u'lláh has revealed Himself to the world.

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Isaiah 40:1 "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain;

5. And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The above prophecy was not fulfilled in the advent of Christ, for in the days of Christ the warfare of Jerusalem was not "accomplished." Since the time of Christ, centuries of trials and humiliation have passed over Jerusalem (See Luke 21:24). With the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, however, the fulfillment is appearing, and a glorious future for all is assured.

Rev. 14:1 "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

The Father's name written in their foreheads, indicates that those with spiritual understanding will be stamped with the name of our God. (Rev. 3:12) Christ used the word "Abba" for Father (See Mark

14:36). Bahá'ís speak of the glorious Kingdom of the Father as the "Abhá" Kingdom.

Rev. 2:17 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

In the present era, the ineffable Glory of our Creator imprints itself upon the faces of those who are spiritually awakened, and the Greatest Name becomes the source of their effulgence. It is the Name of Creation and Resurrection. Vocalized, it is "Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá," the Arabic for "Thou Glory of the Most Glorious." Its divine expression, none save the soul who truly receives it "can understand." The greatness of this NAME consists not in the giving or in the receiving, but in the use. When its utterance is laid upon the soul, that soul has received its Great Gift, and its equal responsibility. By its use the Doors of the Kingdom of God open, illumination is vouchsafed, and divine union results. It is the NAME which is written in a white stone (Rev. 2:17); the "white stone" symbolizes the perfect wisdom. It is the Father's Name which is written in the forehead. (Rev. 14:1 also 22:4)

The name "Israel," in the Hebrew tongue means "followers of the light of God." Concerning this Name, Isaiah writes:

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Isaiah 65:15 “And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.”

This name “Israel” accordingly will be supplanted in this new Day of God by the more universal name “Bahá’í” which in the Arabic language likewise means “followers of the light of God.” God’s elect shall be called by a “new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name.” (Isaiah 62:2)

Proverbs 18:10 “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

CHAPTER 11

FALSE CHRISTS

Matt. 24:24 "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25. Behold, I have told you before."

2 John :7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ."

Numerous sects and philosophers at the present time have advanced the theory of man's own inherent divinity as the source of the light of the world. They maintain that human strength and power are sufficient, with no need of a manifestation of God in human form. These theories of man's ability to reach the heights of wisdom, spirituality and love unaided by God's prophet have become widespread. God sent His Son into the world that His word might become flesh and dwell among men. It is promised that His second coming, when He appears in the power and glory of the Father, shall be in like manner (i.e. in the flesh).

2 Peter 2:1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teach-

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ers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

A parallel statement is found in the Old Testament.

Jer. 5:12 "They have belied the Lord and said, It is not He. Neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword nor famine.

13. And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them."

Atheists, and also some who claim to be religious, deny that God has sent divine messengers to man, nor do they believe that He is able to establish a new creation and kingdom on earth.

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of anti-Christ whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world."

The above advice warns against atheists who do not acknowledge the power of God to send His word

FALSE CHRISTS

into the human realm by manifesting in human form, and the following quotation refers to false teachers who are like wolves in sheep's clothing, using the name of Christ to spread false teachings:

Matt. 24:5 "For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

At the International Conference of Religions held in London, England, there were one hundred and fifty-four different sects all teaching in the Name of Jesus Christ, all having different interpretations of the Word of God, but adding nothing. Some of these interpretations must be false as they otherwise would all be in harmony. On the other hand, Christ promised when He returned in the Glory of the Father, He would give additional teachings. He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will lead you into all truth . . . for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:12-14) Christ's teachings are therefore in harmony with Daniel.

Daniel 12:9 "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh bring New books—the Mother Book, together with full explanations and interpretations of all the prophecies which were to have been sealed until the coming of the Father at the time of the end. Therefore, might we not con-

sider that Christ's warning of deceivers coming in His Name refers to the numerous sects all using His Name, rather than to the coming of the Father with a new name at the time of the end?

Mark 13:21 "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe him not:

22. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."

"And then" signifies a time after the tribulations have been suffered, which Christ has just finished describing. From this prophecy it is most evident and to be expected that there will be some egotistic ones who, after the lesser peace is established, will attempt to usurp the power and authority which belong only to the one true God. They may even attempt to set up false Guardianships in disobedience to the Administration outlined specifically by Bahá'u'lláh, and the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of God's covenant for this age of peace on earth, and will thus try to seduce even the elect, until finally the Most Great Peace is firmly established.

Bahá'u'lláh repeats the warnings of Christ regarding these perilous times that shall come by admonishing His followers in these words:

"Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray

God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Báhá'u'lláh*, page 346)

2 Timothy 3:1 "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, unthankful, unholy.

3. Without natural affection, false accusers, despisers of those that are good.

5. Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

This quotation from 2nd Timothy is in exact accord with the Bahá'í teachings, indicated by the following passage from the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"After the departure of His Holiness Christ many appeared who were instrumental in creating factions, schisms and discussions. It became difficult to know which one was following the right path. One of these disturbers was Nestorius, a Syrian, who proclaimed that Christ was not a prophet of God. This created a division and sect called the Nestorians. The Catholics declared Jesus Christ to be

the Son of God; even pronouncing him to be Deity itself. The Protestants announced the doctrine that Christ embodied two elements—the human and the divine. In brief, divisions were created in the religion of God and it was not known which was pursuing the right pathway because there was no appointed center to whom Christ referred every one, no successor whose word was a gateway to the truth. . . .

“Inasmuch as there was no appointed explainer of the Book of Christ everyone made the claim to authority, saying ‘This is the true pathway and others are not.’ To ward off such dissensions as these and prevent any person from creating a division or sect, the Blessed Perfection Bahá’u’lláh appointed a central authoritative personage, declaring him to be the expounder of the Book. . . . The purpose is to ward off dissension and differences among his followers. Notwithstanding this safeguard and provision against disagreement, there are certain souls here in America and a few in Akká who have violated this explicit command. . . . Whenever they sense the least violation from anyone they should say ‘Begone! you shall not associate with us.’” (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pages 375, 376, 377)

“Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away,” referred to the perilous times of the end, and therefore, were not intended to be practiced during the Christian dispensation. However, just notice how the instructions of Bahá’u’lláh and the Center of His Covenant, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, are in exact accord and har-

mony with conditions foretold by Christ and His disciples. Is this not evidence that civilization is now entering into the last days of peril?

“Many utterances are directed against the violators of the Covenant, the purpose being that no dissension should arise in the blessed cause; that no one should say ‘My opinion is this’; and that all may know who is the authoritative expounder and whatsoever he says is correct. Bahá’u’lláh has not left any possible room for dissension. Naturally there are some who are antagonistic, some who are followers of self-desire, others who hold to their own ideas and still others who wish to create dissension in the cause. For example, Judas Iscariot was one of the disciples yet he betrayed Christ. Such a thing has happened in the past but in this day the Blessed Perfection has declared ‘this person is the expounder of my Book and all must turn to him.’” (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 376)

“We are commanded to turn to one Center. We do not obey various centers. The Blessed Perfection has made a Covenant with us and we are holding to this Covenant and Testament. We do not listen to anything else, for people may arise who speak words of their own and we are commanded not to pay attention to them.” (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pages 379, 380)

“Any opinion expressed by the Center of the Covenant is correct and there is no reason for disobedience by any one. Be watchful, for perchance there may be violators (nakazeen) of the Covenant among you. DO NOT LISTEN TO THEM. Read the Book of the Covenant. All have been commanded

to obey the Covenant; and the first admonition is addressed to the sons of Bahá'u'lláh, the branches: 'You must turn to the appointed Center; he is the expounder of the Book.'

"Should any soul so clearly violate and disobey this command can he even say he is a Bahá'í? If anyone disobeys the explicit command of Christ can he truthfully say he is a Christian?" (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pages 380, 381)

"His Holiness Christ for instance did not appoint a center of authority and explanation. He did not say to his followers 'Obey the one whom I have chosen.' Upon one occasion His Holiness asked his disciples 'Whom say ye that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.' His Holiness wishing to make firm the faith of Peter, said 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church,' meaning that the faith of Peter was the true faith. It was a sanction of Peter's faith. He did not say that all should turn to Peter. He did not say 'He is the branch extended from my ancient root.' He did not say 'O God! bless all who serve Peter. O God! degrade those who are not obedient to him. Shun him who is a violator of the Covenant. O God! thou knowest that I love all who are steadfast in the Covenant.' This has been revealed however in all the books, writings and epistles of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh regarding the appointed Center of the Covenant in this dispensation. Therefore the Bahá'í dispensation is distinguished from all others in this fact, the purpose of His Holiness being that no one could arise to cause differences and disunion." (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 380) (Also see Chapter 16—*Center of Covenant*)

CHAPTER 12

NECESSITY FOR AN INTERCESSOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Isaiah 59:16 "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him.

20. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."

John 1:18 "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

These two Bible quotations cannot be understood without the explanation of the Bahá'í teachings.

"Unless the Holy Spirit become intermediary, one cannot attain directly to the bounties of God. Do not overlook the obvious truth, for it is self-evident that a child cannot be instructed without a teacher, and knowledge is one of the bounties of God. The soil is not covered with grass and vegetation without the rain of the cloud; therefore the cloud is the intermediary between the divine bounties and the soil . . . The light hath a center and if one desire to seek it otherwise than from the center, one can never attain to it . . . Turn thine attention to the days of Christ; some people imagined that without the Mes-

sianic outpourings it was possible to attain to truth, but this very imagination became the cause of their deprivation." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 114)

"If a man wishes to know God, he must find Him in the perfect mirror, Christ, or Bahá'u'lláh. In either of these mirrors he will see reflected the Sun of Divinity." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 113)

"Although God is at all times with His creatures, in, through and over all, 'closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet,' yet man cannot see or hear God; cannot realize His presence until He reveals Himself through a visible form and speaks in human language. For the revelation of His higher attributes, God has always made use of a human instrument. Each of the prophets was a mediator through whom God visited and spoke to His people. Jesus was such a mediator, and the Christians have rightly regarded His appearance as a coming of God. In Him they saw the Face of God, and through His lips they heard the Voice of God." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 59)

John 12:45 "He that seeth me seeth Him that sent me.

46. I am come a light unto the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the coming of the Lord of Hosts, the Everlasting Father, which, according to all the prophets shall take place at the "time of the end," means no other than His manifestation in

a human temple. Christ came in humiliation and was spoken of as a "man of sorrow," but Bahá'u'lláh although a prisoner for forty years, has ushered in a dispensation so glorious that the mind of man is as yet unable to grasp its full significance.

God has provided the atmosphere as the conductor of the light and heat of the sun to the earth, and to the creatures thereon. In like manner God provides a spiritual mediator between His Mighty Being and the consciousness of men. This Mediator is at one and the same time the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the three in one, just as the light, the heat and the invigorating life-giving essence in one are transmitted by the air to plants, animals and men on earth. If there were no atmosphere, the sun's rays could not reach the earth, and if there had been no mediators of spiritual light sent to the souls of men, humanity would not be aware of God's love and instruction, and would cease to exist as human. Without mediators coming from God, mankind would be comparable to plants struggling for growth in a dark cellar. They would never reach maturity, neither physically or spiritually, nor attain the final goal for which they were originally created.

Each day the sun rises, it is known by a different name—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and if there had not been a Noah, an Abraham, a Moses, a Christ, a Muḥammad, a Buddha, and a Zoroaster, if there had been no Bahá'u'lláh—coming in successive springtimes to awaken spiritual consciousness, dormant through a cycle of spiritual winter, there would have been no resurrection, and

no message from God to man, and no evidence of a Creator, who not only creates physically, but guides spiritually.

Christ shows that heaven-sent spiritual guidance can come in no other way except through the manifestations of God on earth, who are different from other men because they have seen the Father, and are thus mediators between God and man. He also states that no one can understand God except by this means. He calls attention to the writings of the prophets, that in the last day they shall all be taught of God, and explains that no one can be a mediator or manifestation of God, except one who has seen God and has been sent by God, with the necessary attributes and strength to carry out the will of God. Therefore, the following teaching of Christ regarding the necessity for belief in the manifestations of God in order to enjoy eternal life, is very important:

John 6:38 "For I come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.

40. For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

43. Murmur not among yourselves.

44. No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day.

45. It is written in the prophets, AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.

46. Not that any man hath seen the Father save he that is from God, he hath seen the Father.

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life."

Human beings have never been able in the past nor the present, individually or collectively, to contact God directly, or to understand His essence. Neither are men able to contact the physical sun, or understand its essence. The physical sun has power to quicken and vivify physical life on earth, through the medium of the air. The spiritual illumination of God, through the medium of His ordained Manifestations has the power to awaken the souls of men to everlasting life.

John 15:26 "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me."

To deny the coming of the Father through the Manifestation of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, i.e., the Glory of God, Bahá'ís believe is equivalent to a denial of Christ who preached the coming of the Father who would bear witness to the divinity of Christ. Bahá'u'lláh teaches that no one can believe in Him without first believing in Christ. Similarly Christ also taught that had they known Moses they would have known Him, as both were manifesting the same God.

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John 5:31 "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32. It is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

39. Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me;

46. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me.

47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

John 7:16 "Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.

17. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.

18. He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?"

John 8:12 "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true.

14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go.

15. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

NECESSITY FOR AN INTERCESSOR

16. Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17. Yea and in your law it is written, that the witness of two men is true.

18. I am he that beareth witness of myself and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

20. In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

In many of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, He bears witness to the Son who preceded him, as Christ foretold He would do. Two short quotations on this subject follow:

"To them that are endowed with understanding, it is clear and manifest that, when the fire of the love of Jesus consumed the veils of Jewish limitations, and His authority was made apparent and partially enforced, He, the Revealer of the unseen Beauty, addressing one day His disciples, referred unto His passing, and, kindling in their hearts the fire of bereavement, said unto them: 'I go away and come again unto you.' And in another place He said: 'I go and another will come, Who will tell you all that I have not told you, and will fulfil all that I have said.' Both these sayings have but one meaning, were ye to ponder upon the Manifestations of

the Unity of God with Divine insight." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 21)

"The Bearers of the Trust of God are made manifest unto the peoples of the earth as the Exponents of a new Cause and the Revealers of a new Message. Inasmuch as these Birds of the Celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they, therefore, are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 50)

The above explanation of the Oneness of God and unity of His divine manifestations, is a complete explanation of Christ's brief statement.

John 8:58 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am."

On the subject of the need for these divine intercessors between God and man, Bahá'u'lláh writes :

"All-praise to the unity of God, and all-honor to Him, the sovereign Lord, the incomparable and all-glorious Ruler of the universe, Who, out of utter nothingness, hath created the reality of all things, Who, from naught, hath brought into being the most refined and subtle elements of His creation, and Who, rescuing His creatures from the abasement of remoteness and the perils of ultimate extinction, hath received them into His kingdom of incorruptible glory. Nothing short of His all-encompassing grace, His all-pervading mercy, could have possibly

achieved it. How could it, otherwise, have been possible for sheer nothingness to have acquired by itself the worthiness and capacity to emerge from its state of non-existence into the realm of being?

"Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him—a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation. . . . Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath been singled out for so great a favor, so enduring a bounty.

"These energies with which the Day Star of Divine bounty and Source of heavenly guidance hath endowed the reality of man lie, however, latent within him, even as the flame is hidden within the candle and the rays of light are potentially present in the lamp. The radiance of these energies may be obscured by worldly desires even as the light of the sun can be concealed beneath the dust and dross which cover the mirror. Neither the candle nor the lamp can be lighted through their own unaided efforts, nor can it ever be possible for the mirror to free itself from its dross. It is clear and evident that until a fire is kindled the lamp will never be ignited, and unless the dross is blotted out from the face of the mirror it can never represent the image of the sun nor reflect its light and glory.

"And since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the one true God with His creation,

and no resemblance whatever can exist between the transient and the Eternal, the contingent and the Absolute He hath ordained that in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. Unto this subtle, this mysterious and ethereal Being He hath assigned a twofold nature; the physical, pertaining to the world of matter, and the spiritual, which is born of the substance of God Himself. He hath, moreover, conferred upon Him a double station. The first station which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself. To this testifieth the tradition: 'Manifold and mysterious is My relationship with God. I am He, Himself, and He is I, Myself, except that I am that I am, and He is that He is.' . . . The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verses: 'I am but a man like you.' 'Say, praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle?' . . .

"From the foregoing passages and allusions it hath been indubitably clear that in the kingdoms of earth and heaven there must needs be manifested a Being, an Essence Who shall act as a Manifestation and Vehicle for the transmission of the grace of the Divinity Itself, the Sovereign Lord of all. Through the Teachings of this Day Star of Truth every man will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed. It is for this very purpose that in every age and dispensation the Prophets of God and His chosen Ones have appeared amongst men, and have evinced such power as is born of God and

such might as only the Eternal can reveal.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 64, 65, 66, 67, 68)

Spiritual advancement, which includes development of all the divine attributes such as charity, love, forgiveness, honor, virtue, honesty, faith, humility, kindness, unselfishness, graciousness, means a great increase of mental perception, as well as physical well-being, but it is impossible save through the guidance of God given to mankind through the word and works of His Divine Manifestations who are sent to earth for this express purpose. This point is more particularly explained by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

“Briefly, if to the knowledge of God is joined the love of God, and attraction, ecstasy, and goodwill, a righteous action is then perfect and complete. Otherwise, though a good action is praiseworthy, yet if it is not sustained by the knowledge of God, the love of God, and a sincere intention, it is imperfect. For example, the being of man must unite all perfections to be perfect. Sight is extremely precious and appreciated, but it must be aided by hearing; the hearing is much appreciated, but it must be aided by the power of speech; the faculty of speech is very acceptable, but it must be aided by the power of reason, and so forth. The same is true of the other powers, organs and members of man; when all these powers, these senses, these organs, these members exist, he is perfect.

“Now, today, we meet with people in the world who, in truth, desire the universal good, and who

according to their power occupy themselves in protecting the oppressed and in aiding the poor: they are enthusiastic for peace and the universal well being. Although from this point of view they may be perfect, if they are deprived of the knowledge and love of God, they are imperfect. (*Some Answered Questions*, pages 346, 347)

“In the same way, when a person performs a good action, although it is praiseworthy, if it is not caused by the love and knowledge of God, it is imperfect. Moreover, if you reflect justly, you will see that these good actions of other men who do not know God are also fundamentally caused by the teachings of God; that is to say, that the former Prophets led men to perform these actions, explained their beauty to them, and declared their splendid effects; then these teachings were diffused among men, and reached them successively, one after the other, and turned their hearts towards these perfections. When men saw that these actions were considered beautiful, and became the cause of joy and happiness for mankind, they conformed to them.

“Wherefore these actions also come from the teachings of God. But justice is necessary to see this, and not controversy and discussion.” (*Some Answered Questions*, page 349)

Until we have known the Glory of God revealed in the manifestation of the Word made flesh, we can have no idea of the spiritual beauty latent in our own nature, and in that of others. By knowing and loving the Manifestations of God, following their commands and understanding their teachings, we are able to realize the potential perfections within all

things. Then, and not until then, do the meaning and purpose of life and of the universe become apparent.

Bahá'u'lláh declares: "The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory! and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His divine Manifestation." (*Words of Wisdom*)

The foregoing words completely explain that which has been declared throughout the ages, from the same source of light and life, quoted more briefly below:

Prov. 9:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Prov. 30:2 "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man."

3. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy."

1 Cor. 15:34 "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame."

Eph. 3:19 "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever."

It is self-evident from the foregoing quotations that the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are in exact conformity and agreement with that which has been

previously taught in the Holy Scriptures. There is much more to add to clarify the meaning of the Scriptures which have sometimes been hidden in parable or so worded as to cause humankind to debate as to the real meaning. Not until the Divine Revelator has appeared in these latter days as foretold by Christ and all of the other prophets before Him, has a full and clear explanation been given so that even a child can understand. Until this Divine Revelator appeared according to schedule, these explanations were not known, although humankind made many and varying speculations. Further, on the subject of the necessity of an intermediary between God and man, 'Abdu'l-Bahá taught :

“Unless the Holy Spirit become intermediary, one cannot attain directly to the bounties of God. Do not overlook the obvious truth, for it is self-evident that a child cannot be instructed without a teacher . . . The soil is not covered with grass and vegetation without the rain of the cloud ; therefore the cloud is the intermediary between the divine bounties and the soil . . . The light hath a center and if one desire to seek it otherwise than from the center, one can never attain to it. Turn thine attention to the days of Christ ; some people imagined that without the Messianic outpourings it was possible to attain to truth, but this very imagination became the cause of their deprivation.” (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 114)

“If a man wishes to know God, he must find Him in the perfect mirror, Christ or Bahá'u'lláh. In either of these mirrors he will see reflected the Sun of Divinity.” (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 113)

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“Although God is at all times with His creatures, in, through and over all, ‘closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet,’ yet man cannot see or hear God; cannot realize His presence until He reveals Himself through a visible form and speaks in human language. For the revelation of His higher attributes, God has always made use of a human instrument. Each of the prophets was a mediator through whom God visited and spoke to His people. Jesus was such a mediator, and the Christians have rightly regarded His appearance as a coming of God. In Him they saw the Face of God, and through His lips they heard the Voice of God.” (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 59)

Jer. 10:23 “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

A clear and true explanation of this brief verse is taken from the teachings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

“Consider the records of bygone philosophers; the utmost that they could do was to educate themselves. The circle of their influence was very limited. All that they could do was to instruct a few pupils. Of such a type was the influence of Plato and Aristotle. These philosophers were only able to train a limited number of people. The prophets of God were neither philosophers nor celebrated for their genius. Outwardly, they belonged to the common people, but as they were encircled with the all-comprehending power of the Holy Spirit they were thus enabled to impart a general education to all men. For instance, his holiness Christ and his holiness Muḥammad were

not among the thinkers of the age, neither were they counted great geniuses; but through the power of the Holy Spirit they were able to confer universal instruction upon many nations.

"They illumined the world of morality. They laid the foundation of a spiritual sovereignty which is everlasting. It is the same with those souls who have entered the tabernacle of the Cause of God. Although not important in appearance, yet everyone is confirmed in stimulating the cause of general moral instruction. Therefore it has become evident that real spiritual universal education cannot be realized save through the breath of the Holy Spirit. Man must not look at his own capabilities, but think of the power of the Holy Spirit." (*The Divine Art of Living*, page 156)

The above explanation brings to mind the evident meaning of the following scripture.

1 Cor. 1:25 "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28. And base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29. That no flesh should glory in his presence.

31. That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Continuing with the wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on this subject :

"No philosophy, no system, has ever changed the manners and customs of the people for the better. The morals of the philosophers who are not enlightened by the divine Spirit are inferior. An ignorant man filled with the Holy Spirit, is powerful. He who is educated by the Holy Spirit can in his turn educate others in the same spirit.

"The life and morals of a spiritual man are in themselves an education to others. Let your thoughts, words and actions bring life to those around you. Do not think of your own limitations; dream only of the welfare of the Kingdom of Abhá. See the influence of Jesus Christ among his apostles, then consider their influence on others. These simple men were helped by the power of the Holy Spirit. So may you receive the divine assistance. Our capabilities are limited, but the help of the Kingdom of Abhá is limitless. The earth of itself has no properties of life, but it is fertilized by the sun and the rain. The earth must not consider its own limited power." (*The Divine Art of Living*, pages 157, 158)

If God did not manifest Himself on earth, mankind would faint away in spiritual darkness and be no more for want of life, light and love. There would be no growth, only stagnation. Assurance that the Lord does remember to strengthen and teach His children is expressed in the Psalms, for example :

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Psalms 27:13 "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

14. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

CHAPTER 13

ONENESS OF GOD

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord."

Similarly, as in the realm of reality, so also in phenomenal life. Only one sun shines, although the designations of the days and months are different. It is the same sun shining whether the time is called Sunday, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, April, May or June. The sun is the sun no matter from what horizon it may appear—whether from the North or from the South. It is the same sun in January as in June, but its rays come from different angles. So it is with the spiritual light. It is the same, though divine teachings are given under different circumstances and situations, or from different angles, and a new light arises at the beginning of each Day of the Lord (approximately 1,000 years). The spiritual light is reflected in the Word of God which becomes flesh, dwelling among men, and is as manifest to all as is the reflection of the sun in a clear mirror. Thus God imparts his love and knowledge to the souls of men, without which there would

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be no spiritual life as surely as without the light and heat of the sun, there would be no vegetation.

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment."

When this love of God has become perfect in the hearts, souls and minds of men with full strength, then all can appreciate the significance of the prayers revealed for the Age of Peace on earth, and sing eternal praises to God. A part of one of these prayers is herewith quoted:

"Since thou hast, O my God, established Thyself upon the throne of Thy transcendent unity, and ascended the mercy seat of Thy oneness, it becometh Thee to blot out from the hearts of all beings whatsoever may keep them back from gaining admittance into the sanctuary of Thy Divine mysteries, and may shut them out from the tabernacle of Thy Divinity, that all hearts may mirror Thy beauty, and may reveal Thee, and speak of Thee, and that all created things may show forth the tokens of Thy most august sovereignty, and shed the splendors of the light of Thy most holy governance, and that all who are in heaven and on earth may laud and magnify Thy unity and give Thee glory, for having manifested Thy Self unto them through Him Who is the Revealer of Thy oneness." (*Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, page 324)

How stirring are the following words, which are an answer to the above prayer:

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“Today, this servant has assuredly come to vivify the world and to bring into unity all who are on the face of the earth. That which God willeth shall come to pass and thou shalt see the earth even as the Abhá (Most Glorious) Paradise.” (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 192)

Another valuable teaching on the Oneness of God follows :

“He is a true believer in Divine unity who, far from confusing duality with oneness, refuseth to allow any notion of multiplicity to becloud his conception of the singleness of God, who will regard the Divine Being as One Who, by His very nature, transcendeth the limitations of numbers.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 166)

The following quotations from the Bible and words of Bahá'u'lláh are equivalent in meaning, expressing and explaining the true meaning of the oneness of God.

“ ‘God was alone ; there was none else beside Him.’ He, now, is what He hath ever been. There is none other God, but Him, the One, the Incomparable, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 192)

Deut. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is One Lord.”

“And now concerning thy reference to the existence of two Gods, Beware, beware, lest thou be led to

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join partners with the Lord thy God. He is, and hath from everlasting been, one and alone, without peer or equal, eternal in the past, eternal in the future, detached from all things, ever-abiding, unchangeable, and self-subsisting. He hath assigned no associate unto Himself in His Kingdom, no counsellor to counsel Him, none to compare unto Him, none to rival His glory." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 192)

Isaiah 45:22 "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else."

"Bear thou witness in thine inmost heart unto this testimony which God hath Himself and for Himself pronounced, that there is none other God but Him, that all else besides Him have been created by His behest, have been fashioned by His leave, are subject to His law, are as a thing forgotten when compared to the glorious evidences of His oneness, and are as nothing when brought face to face with the mighty revelations of His unity." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 192, 193)

Psalms 86:10 "For Thou art great and doest wondrous things—Thou art God alone."

"He, in truth, hath throughout eternity, been one in His Essence, one in His attributes, one in His works. Any and every comparison is applicable only to His creatures, and all conceptions of association are conceptions that belong solely to those that serve Him. Immeasurably exalted is His Essence above the descriptions of His creatures. He, alone, occu-

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pieth the Seat of transcendent majesty, of supreme and inaccessible glory." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 193)

Job. 36:26 "Behold God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out."

"The birds of men's hearts, however high they soar, can never hope to attain the heights of His unknowable Essence. It is He Who hath called into being the whole of creation, Who hath caused every created thing to spring forth at His behest. Shall, then, the thing that was born by virtue of the word which His Pen hath revealed, and which the finger of His Will hath directed, be regarded as partner with Him, or an embodiment of His self? Far be it from His glory that human pen or tongue should hint at His mystery, or that human heart conceive His Essence. All else besides Him stand poor and desolate at His door, all are powerless before the greatness of His might, all are but slaves in His Kingdom. He is rich enough to dispense with all creatures.

"The tie of servitude established between the worshipper and the Adored One, between the creature and the Creator, should in itself be regarded as a token of His gracious favor unto men, and not as an indication of any merit they may possess. To this testifieth every true and discerning believer." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 193, 194)

"He is really a believer in the Unity of God who recognizeth in each and every created thing the sign

of the revelation of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and not he who maintaineth that the creature is indistinguishable from the Creator." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 189)

"Witness how the divers peoples and kindreds of the earth bear witness to His unity, and recognize His oneness. But for the sign of the Unity of God within them, they would have never acknowledged the truth of the words, 'There is none other God but God.'" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 191)

It is inevitable therefore, on account of this oneness of God, Who provides for all and endows each being with ability, faculties and talent, that He should be acknowledged the rightful ruler of mankind, Whose commands shall be obeyed, and Whose guidance shall be observed. As a result of this realization and enlightenment by mankind, nothing can delay the fulfillment of the following prophecy:

Zech. 14:9 "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; In that day shall there be one Lord and His name one."

CHAPTER 14

PLACE WHERE "GLORY OF GOD" APPEARS

Ezek: 43:2 "And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East, and His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His Glory.

4. And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the Gate whose prospect is toward the East."

The New Testament is in harmony with the Old, as to location:

Matt. 24:27 "As the lightning cometh from the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the son of man be."

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son and also the Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, toured throughout America and Europe, immediately upon His release from prison, He made the following significant statement in one of His lectures in Chicago:

"It is stated in certain prophecies that when the standard of God appears in the east its signs will become evident in the west. This is truly good news and glad-tidings for you. I hope that this promise may be fulfilled in you and that all may be able to

testify to the spirit and truth of the prophetic announcement, saying 'Verily the standard of God did appear in the east and its tokens have become resplendent in the west.' This realization will be a source of great joy to all the friends in the Orient who anticipate the good news and await the glad-tidings from the land of the Occident. They look forward to hearing that the friends in the west have become firm and steadfast, that they have distinguished themselves by establishing the oneness of the world of humanity, that they are even offering their lives for the foundations of International Peace, that they have become the lights of the Kingdom and have proved to be the manifestations of divine mercy, that the friends in the west are the expression of the favors of the Blessed Perfection, the very stars of the bestowal of God, blessed trees and flowers in the garden of his purity and sanctity. Any good news from here is the cause of rejoicing in the east and a source of deep gratitude to them . . . If the occasion demanded, they would give their lives for you without the least hesitation. The friends in the east are all united and agreed." (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 379)

All the prophecies are unanimous in declaring the Glory of the Lord shall come to the Holy Land from the East, manifesting itself in the west. His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh appeared in 'Irán, which is Eastward from Palestine, toward the rising of the sun, and He was exiled to the Holy Land where He spent the last twenty-four years of His life. If He had gone there as a free man, people might have said that it was the trick of an impostor in order to

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conform to the prophecies, but He was sent there as a prisoner, having been held a prisoner forty years of His life.

Zech. 2:10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith The Lord.

11. And many nations shall be joined to The Lord in that day and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee."

"The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled. Out of Zion hath gone forth the Law of God, and Jerusalem, and the hills and land thereof, are filled with the glory of His Revelation. Happy is the man that pondereth in his heart that which hath been revealed in the Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Meditate upon this, O ye beloved of God, and let your ears be attentive unto His Word, so that ye may, by His grace and mercy, drink your fill from the crystal waters of constancy, and become as steadfast and immovable as the mountain in His Cause." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 12, 13)

His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh was banished to the solitary desert place in the prison at 'Akká, Palestine. As He was a lover of verdure, his friends who visited Him from all parts of the world, sent Him plants and seeds which were planted around about the prison at 'Akká, and although it was a desert and unsanitary and foul, after His arrival the place be-

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came a beautiful garden, fulfilling this prophecy of Isaiah :

Isaiah 35 :1 "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

2. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing ; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the Glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

We herewith quote from a book entitled "*The Oriental Rose*" by Mary Hanford Ford, which verifies the above prophecy :

"Bahá'u'lláh and His family were sent there to die, but instead of that they have transformed 'Akká into a city of health and refreshment, and the dangerous, depressing elements of the climate and locality have entirely disappeared.

"In former days the currents of the ocean threw upon the seashore masses of unsightly and ill smelling debris ; dead fish, seaweed and all the malodorous contents of the tidal ebb seemed to be flung there, and no flood was ever full enough to carry them off. So they lay rotting in the hot sun of the tropics, breeding fevers for the destruction of the inhabitants. The Sultan would permit no measures for the purification of the harbor and shore. He wished his prison city to remain as unwholesome as possible because it was intended to be a place of death.

"After the Glory of God had dwelt within the walls for some time there came a change. An alteration in the ocean currents became evident, the un-

sightly accumulation upon the shore was washed away, the offal of the region was carried far out into the purifying ocean, and the silvery strand of 'Akká was played upon only by glittering blue waters and fragrant breezes.

"Meanwhile, a very wealthy convert one day came into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. He was an Arabian Sheik of enormous possessions, and he had planned to place an immense sum in the hands of the Manifestation as a symbol of his devotion. The Blessed Perfection, however, would not accept money from His followers. One significant point in this remarkable movement has always been that its beautiful teachings are never given for money. They are regarded as the gift of God, which must be freely imparted, not sold.

"Again and again the old Sheik proffered his gift and it was refused. At length Bahá'u'lláh saw how deeply disappointed was His follower. The Sheik was an old man, and had felt that he would die more happily if he had bestowed this money. So, as His friend was turning away in sadness, the Blessed Perfection recalled him and said:

'Do you really want to give me this money?' and when his noble guest positively fell upon his knees in affirmation, He went on:

'I can not take money, but if you wish to make me very happy you can do this for me. The people of 'Akká suffer for water. All the water of the valley is brackish and unwholesome, but yonder beyond the mountains,' pointing to the distant hills, 'is a bottomless lake of pure mountain water. Pipe it down to the city and bring it up in a fountain, where it will be free to all. But that will cost a great deal of money!'

“Do you think any human being could have considered money in such a moment? The splendor of life surrounded the old Sheik, and his happiness was supreme as he hurried away to perform the behest of the Messenger of God. To-day the people of ‘Akká have this delicious water piped into their houses, and the spectre of fever is still farther banished from their hearthstones.

“From the moment that Bahá’u’lláh became accessible to His followers, so that even a glimpse of His radiant face would reward a toilsome journey to ‘Akká throngs of pilgrims turned toward the prison city, eager to carry away a memory of the Glory of God, and eager also to do something to show the ardor of their faith. They soon discovered that Bahá’u’lláh would not accept gifts of value, but that He loved flowers and rare plants. So they began to carry with them seeds, slips and roots, from the flora of their own locality, especially such as were fragrant, unusual and beautiful. Tradition has it that no frail atom of a delicate shrub, wrapped in moss, and borne across the desert ever failed to live and thrive when planted at length in the grateful soil of much blessed ‘Akká.

“The result has been the charming garden of the Ridván, surely one of the loveliest spots in the universe. Here are plants and flowers from Egypt, Arabia, and India, fragrant violets, crimson passion flowers, red anemones, tea roses, flowers so delicate and white they are like frost in the tropics, and blossoms that seem to weigh down the plant that bears them with their rich fragrance. Oranges ripen here, and rich deep colored roses like those of our American Beauty variety, but more sweetly odorous.

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The Blessed Perfection was especially fond of these magnificent blooms, and was accustomed to water their roots with his own hand." (pages 114 to 118.)

Isaiah 55:12 "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Zech. 2:10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.

11. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee."

Psalms 132:13 "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for His habitation."

Regarding the prophecies as to the location the Lord shall choose for His Manifestation to appear, Bahá'u'lláh has this to say:

"This Holy Land hath been mentioned and extolled in all the sacred Scriptures. In it have appeared the Prophets of God and His chosen Ones. This is the wilderness in which all the Messengers of God have wandered, from which their cry, "Here am I, here am I, O my God" was raised. This is the promised Land in which He Who is the Revelation of God was destined to be made manifest. This is the Vale of God's unsearchable decree, the snow-

white Spot, the Land of unfading splendor. Whatever hath come to pass in this Day hath been foretold in the Scriptures of old. These same Scriptures, however, unanimously condemn the people that inhabit this land. They have, at one time, been stigmatized as the 'generation of vipers.' Behold how this wronged One is now, whilst surrounded by a 'generation of vipers,' calling aloud and summoning all men to Him Who is the world's Ultimate Desire, the Summit and Day Spring of Glory. Happy is the man that hath hearkened to the voice of Him Who is the Lord of the Kingdom of Utterance, and woe betide the heedless, they that have strayed far from His truth." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 344)

Psalms 102:16 "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in His glory.

17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer.

18. This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

19. For He hath looked down from the heights of His sanctuary; from the heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death!

21. To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem.

22. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord."

According to Micah the "last days" are described as a time when men shall learn war no more. This

could not possibly refer to the Christian dispensation during which there have been many wars. Neither was the Christian dispensation the last, for the last is specifically designated the millennium when there shall be peace on earth. Micah also specifically mentions that the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. That has not been the headquarters for Christendom.

Micah 4:1 "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

2. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

CHAPTER 15

TIME OF THE END

Matt. 24:36 "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.

37. And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

44. Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

50. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not."

Before the coming of the manifestation of the Father, the time of His appearance is unknown, but after His advent the time of His coming is no longer unknown for He then informs those who have been watching and waiting. This imperfect knowledge as to the time of the coming of the Glory of God becomes accurately known as soon as it is fulfilled.

1 Cor. 13:9 "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

Jeremiah is ashamed because human beings are not as alert to the signs of the times as the lower forms of life, yet his insight is true:

Jer. 8:7 "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

9. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"

Bahá'u'lláh is as aware of the heedlessness of human beings as Jeremiah was, and addresses them in the following way:

"Shake off, O heedless ones, the slumber of negligence, that ye may behold the radiance which His glory hath spread through the world. How foolish are those who murmur against the premature birth of His light. O ye who are inly blind! Whether too soon or too late, the evidences of His effulgent glory are now actually manifest. It behooveth you to ascertain whether or not such a light hath appeared. It is neither within your power nor mine to set the time at which it should be made manifest. God's inscrutable Wisdom hath fixed its hour beforehand. Be content, O people, with that which God hath desired for you and predestined unto you." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 103)

Christ informed His followers how they could recognize the time of the advent of the Father:

Matt. 24:32 "Now from the fig tree learn her parable; when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh;

33. Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that He is nigh, even at the doors.

34. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till these things be fulfilled."

"This generation" is usually thought of as one lifetime, but it no doubt also means "this dispensation" because it is evident that this prophecy was not fulfilled in the Christian dispensation, but inasmuch as the world has progressed in discoveries and inventions in the past hundred years to a greater degree than it has during five thousand years previously, it is evident that some powerful force has been released during this time.

Still another way to check the time of His coming is given as follows:

Question: Matt. 24:3 "As He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?'"

Answer: Matt. 24:15 "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the Holy Place (whoso readeth let him understand)."

In this answer, Christ referred to the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, and that those who read will understand that it is the time of the end or the beginning of a new dispensation which is meant by the

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figures given by Daniel. The dates given by Muḥammad are in perfect agreement with those of Daniel. Also the Revelation of St. John uses the same figures. (See Daniel 8:13; Daniel 9:25 and Daniel 12:6)

According to Daniel, the proper interpretation of these figures and other Biblical mysteries was to be sealed until the time of the end, at which time the true meaning would be explained by God's authorized Manifestation coming in the Glory of the Father.

Daniel 12:4 "But Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end."

Now since Bahá'u'lláh has appeared at the time of the end, a full and clear interpretation of these figures has been revealed. It is not the purpose of this compilation to repeat all of the teachings and interpretations in the Bahá'í Revelation, as these are available in other Bahá'í books, including a full explanation of the interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John.

As time is short, it might be summed up with the words of Bahá'u'lláh:

"All the signs have been revealed; every prophetic allusion hath been manifested. Whatever hath been enshrined in all the scriptures of the past hath been made evident. To doubt or hesitate is no more possible. . . . Time is pressing. The Divine Charger is impatient, and can tarry no longer." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 111)

CHAPTER 16

THE TEMPLE AND THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

Isaiah 4:6 "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."

11 Cor. 6:16 "And what agreement hath the Temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

God will dwell and walk with man in His temple, for the real temples are the Manifestations of the living God, further explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá who has been designated the Center of the Covenant and expounder of the Word by Bahá'u'lláh for the time of the end, or for the 1000 years of peace at the time of the end:

"Temples are symbols of the reality and divinity of God; the collective center of mankind. Consider how within a temple every race and people is seen and represented; all in the presence of the Lord, covenanting together in a covenant of love and fellowship; all offering the same melody, prayer and supplication to God. Therefore it is evident that the church is a collective center for mankind. For this

reason there have been churches and temples in all the divine religions; but the real collective centers are the manifestations of God, of whom the church or temple is a symbol and expression. That is to say, the manifestation of God is the real divine temple, and collective center of which the outer church is but a symbol." (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 158)

The above explanation sheds much light upon the declaration of Christ, in the following quotation:

John 2:19 "Jesus answered the Jews and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21. But He spake of the temple of His body."

It is evident from the above that the real Temple or center of worship in every religion has been the Manifestation of God in human form, symbolized by the outer material temple or Collective Center.

'Abdu'l-Baha continued: "In brief, the original purpose of temples and houses of worship is simply that of unity; places of meeting where various peoples, different races and souls of every capacity may come together in order that love and agreement should be manifest between them. That is why His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place of worship be built for all the religionists of the world; that all religions, races and sects may come

together within its universal shelter; that the proclamation of the oneness of mankind shall go forth from its open courts of holiness; the announcement that humanity is the servant of God and that all are submerged in the ocean of His mercy." (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 62)

"It is self-evident that humanity is at variance. Human tastes differ; thoughts, nativities, races and tongues are many. The need of a collective center by which these differences may be counter-balanced and the people of the world be unified is obvious. Consider how nothing but a spiritual power can bring about this unification; for material conditions and mental aspects are so widely different that agreement and unity are not possible through outer means. It is possible however for all to become unified through one spirit, just as all may receive light from one sun. Therefore assisted by the collective and divine center which is the law of God and the reality of His manifestation, we can overcome these conditions until they pass away entirely and the races advance." (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pages 158, 159)

"'And the temple of God was opened in heaven,' means that the divine Jerusalem is found, and the Holy of Holies has become visible. The Holy of Holies, according to the terminology of the people of wisdom, is the essence of the Divine Law, and the heavenly and true teachings of the Lord, which have not been changed in the cycle of any Prophet, as it was before explained. The sanctuary of Jerusalem is likened to the reality of the Law of God, which is the Holy of Holies, and all the laws, conventions, rites and material regulations are the city

of Jerusalem—this is why it is called the heavenly Jerusalem. Briefly, as in this cycle the Sun of Reality will make the light of God shine with the utmost splendour, therefore the essence of the teachings of God will be realized in the world of existence, and the darkness of ignorance and want of knowledge will be dispelled; the world will become a new world, and enlightenment will prevail. So the Holy of Holies will appear.

“‘And the temple of God was opened in heaven,’ means also that by the diffusion of the divine teachings, the appearance of these heavenly mysteries, and the rising of the Sun of Reality, the doors of success and prosperity will be opened in all directions, and the signs of goodness and heavenly benedictions will be made plain.

“‘And there was seen in His temple the ark of His Testament.’ That is to say, the Book of His Testament will appear in His Jerusalem, the Epistle of the Covenant will be established and the meaning of the Testament and of the Covenant will become evident. The renown of God will overspread the East and West, and the proclamation of the Cause of God will fill the world. The violators of the Covenant will be degraded and dispersed, and the faithful cherished and glorified, for they cling to the Book of the Testament, and are firm and steadfast in the Covenant.” (*Some Answered Questions*, pages 70, 71)

The temple therefore stands for the law of God, and also at the same time for the reality of His Manifestation who brings this law. In heeding them

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thus will the nations serve the Lord day and night in his temple, as spoken in the following prophecy:

Rev. 7:15 "Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

Even as the solar system is dark and obscure and in need of the sun which is the center of light and all planets of the system revolve around it and are partakers of its bounty, so even are human beings unable to expound the meaning of God's word, but have need of a Holy Manifestation of God to be their center of the light of reality, and to manifest the bounties of love—a center to whom all may turn for spiritual guidance. "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them," indicates that the temple of the body of God's manifestation on earth will be stationed here, dwelling amongst men. This has become an actual fact in this day, the Sabbath of the Lord, as Bahá'u'lláh has provided for a Center of His Covenant, through which a perpetual guardianship has been established to function on earth.

"As to the most great characteristic of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh—a specific teaching not given by any of the prophets of the past—it is the ordination and appointment of the Center of the Covenant. By this appointment and provision he has safeguarded and protected the religion of God against differences and schisms, making it impossible for anyone to create a new sect or faction of belief. To insure unity

and agreement he has entered into a Covenant with all the people of the world including the interpreter and explainer of his teachings so that no one may interpret or explain the religion of God according to his own view or opinion and thus create a sect founded upon his individual understanding of the divine words. The Book of the Covenant or Testament of Bahá'u'lláh is the means of preventing such a possibility, for whosoever shall speak from the authority of himself alone shall be degraded. Be ye informed and cognizant of this. Beware lest anyone shall secretly question or deny this to you." (*Pro-mulgation of Universal Peace*, page 451)

"'Abdu'l-Bahá, writing in confirmation of the authority conferred upon Him by Bahá'u'lláh, makes the following statement: "In accordance with the explicit text of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh hath made the Center of the Covenant the Interpreter of His Word—a Covenant so firm and mighty that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 136)

"'And there were lightnings and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail,' meaning that after the appearance of the Book of the Testament there will be a great storm, and the lightnings of the anger and the wrath of God will flash, the noise of the thunder of the violation of the Covenant will resound, the earthquake of doubts will take place, the hail of torments will beat upon the violators of the Covenant, and even those who profess belief will fall into trials and temptations." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 71)

“My purpose is to explain to you that it is your duty to guard the religion of God so that none shall be able to assail it outwardly or inwardly. If you find harmful teachings are being set forth by some individual no matter who that individual be, even though he should be my own son, know verily that I am completely severed from him. If anyone speaks against the Covenant, even though he should be my son, know that I am opposed to him. Those who speak falsehoods, who covet worldly things and seek to accumulate the riches of this earth are not of me. But when you find a person living up to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, following the precepts of the *Hidden Words*, know that he belongs to Bahá'u'lláh and verily I proclaim that he is of me. If on the other hand you see anyone whose deeds and conduct are contrary to and not in conformity with the good-pleasure of the Blessed Perfection and against the spirit of the *Hidden Words*, let that be your standard and criterion of judgment against him, for know that I am altogether severed from him no matter who he may be. This is the truth.” (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 452)

“Any opinion expressed by the Center of the Covenant is correct and there is no reason for disobedience by any one. Be watchful, for perchance there may be violators (nakazeen) of the Covenant among you. Do not listen to them. Read the Book of the Covenant. All have been commanded to obey the Covenant; and the first admonition is addressed to the sons of Bahá'u'lláh, the branches: ‘You must turn to the appointed Center; he is the expounder of the Book.’

“Should any soul so clearly violate and disobey

this command can he even say he is a Bahá'í? If anyone disobeys the explicit command of Christ can he truthfully say he is a Christian?" (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pages 380, 381) (Also See Chapter 11. False Christs regarding Covenant Breakers.)

There may be some who think it is unkind to turn away from anyone, even from blasphemers, and to stand firm as a rock regarding the Covenant of God, but it is only by this firmness that the Covenant can be kept pure from the worldly ambitious who may desire to enter the Cause only to try to discredit the Covenant and weaken the faith of others, thus delaying the Most Great Peace! For there are some who refuse to see when good cometh to them. Thus the Cause of God in this Day is safeguarded by those who are firm through the power and love of God. These firm ones seem to be endowed with special powers from on high for this purpose, and nothing can withstand their power as long as they obey and live according to the spirit of the *Hidden Words* of Bahá'u'lláh. This Divine Covenant thus attracts into its membership souls who have the purest motives and who continually look to the teachings of the Heavenly Father sent to earth through His manifestation in human form. Such souls do not continue to conform to outworn worldly standards but become illumined by the light of the Word of God. The command of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant, quoted above, and also quoted in Chapter Eleven, requesting Bahá'ís to turn away from the

ungodly and from those who try to break His Covenant were foretold in the writings of St. Paul, as follows:

2 Timothy 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.

4. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5. Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

Most important regarding the Covenant of God is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's advice:

"O ye kind friends! Uplift your magnanimity and soar high toward the apex of heaven—so that your blessed hearts may become illumined more and more, day by day, through the Rays of the Sun of Reality, i.e. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh; at every moment the spirits may obtain a new life, and the darkness of the world of nature may be entirely dispelled—thus ye may become incarnate light and personified spirit, become entirely unaware of the sordid matters of this world and in touch with the affairs of the divine world.

"Consider ye what doors His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has opened before you and what a high and exalted station He has destined for you, and what bounties He has prepared for you! Should we

become intoxicated with this cup, the sovereignty of this globe of earth will become lower in our estimation than the children's plays. Should they place in the arena the crown of the government of the whole world, and invite each one of us to accept it, undoubtedly we shall not condescend, and shall refuse to accept it.

"To attain to this supreme station is, however, dependent on the realization of certain conditions :

"The first condition is firmness in the Covenant of God. For the power of the Covenant will protect the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh from the doubts of the people of error. It is the fortified fortress of the Cause of God and the firm pillar of the religion of God. To-day no power can conserve the oneness of the Bahá'í world save the Covenant of God ; otherwise differences like unto a most great tempest will encompass the Bahá'í world. It is evident that the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity is the power of the Covenant and nothing else. Had the Covenant not come to pass, had it not been revealed from the Supreme Pen and had not the Book of the Covenant, like unto the ray of the Sun of Reality, illuminated the world the forces of the Cause of God would have been utterly scattered and certain souls who were the prisoners of their own passions and lusts would have taken into their hands an axe, cutting the root of this Blessed Tree. Every person would have pushed forward his own desire and every individual aired his own opinion ! Notwithstanding this great Covenant, a few negligent souls galloped with their chargers into the battlefield, thinking perchance they might be able to weaken the foundation of the Cause of God : but praise be to God all of

them were afflicted with regret and loss, and ere long they shall see themselves in poignant despair. Therefore, in the beginning one must make his steps firm in the Covenant—so that the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh may encircle from all sides, the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse may become the supporters and the helpers, and the exhortations and advices of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, like unto the pictures engraved on stone, may remain permanent and ineffaceable in the tablets of the hearts." (*Bahá'í Scriptures*, pages 540, 541, 542)

CHAPTER 17

A UNITED WORLD RELIGION

John 10:16 "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

Up to this century these beautiful and prophetic words of Christ have not been completely fulfilled. During the Christian dispensation or the Age of Grace all nations and races have learned of the life and teachings of Jesus, and have also become informed of the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments. God has sent His prophets and teachers to humanity repeatedly as all of the Holy Books testify, and these Holy Books are in agreement; whether they belong to the Jews, the Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians or Muḥammadans. In the Koran, Muḥammad instructed his followers to investigate the reality of Christ. Through Christ the Old Testament was accepted by the Gentiles. Thus, the way has been paved for all nations, races, and religions to understand the truth of the words of Bahá'u'lláh who teaches that the foundation of all religions is one, and that the earth is destined to become a Paradise of Glory as soon as all the sincere

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believers in One God acknowledge the wisdom in the divine command to lay aside all religious, racial and national prejudices and co-operate under the covenant provided by the Father, as foretold. By this divine covenant, now given out to the whole world, can all the lovers of God and of one another become united regardless of divisions which have existed in former ages. Bahá'u'lláh can better express this in His own words:

“The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His Glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves. That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feeling of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

“Gird up the loins of your endeavor, O people of Bahá that haply the tumult of religious dissension and strife that agitateth the peoples of the earth may be stilled, that every trace of it may be completely obliterated. For the love of God, and them that serve Him, arise to aid this most sublime and momentous Revelation. Religious fanaticism and hatred are a world-devouring fire, whose violence none can quench. The Hand of Divine Power can, alone, deliver mankind from this desolating affliction . . .

"The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light are these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 287)

"Religion is the greatest instrument for the order of the world and the tranquillity of all existent beings. The weakness of the pillars of religion has encouraged the ignorant and rendered them audacious and arrogant. Truly, I say, whatever lowers the lofty station of religion will increase heedlessness in the wicked, and finally result in anarchy." (*Bahá'í Scriptures*, page 148, paragraph 106)

Matt. 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

This does not refer to the physical sun but to the darkening of the sun of spiritual truth, just as is taking place now all over the world. The moon has been considered by religionists as symbolical of the Church, and the question is, has the reflection of the Moon become clouded and obscured? When the power of religion is shaken it can be expressed as the "powers of the heavens," for religion is the heaven of reality.

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“Consider the civilization of the people of the Occident—how it has occasioned commotion and agitation to the people of the world. Infernal instruments have been devised, and such atrocity is displayed in the destruction of life as has not been seen by the eye of the world, nor heard by the ear of nations. It is impossible to reform these violent, overwhelming evils, except the peoples of the world become united upon a certain issue or under the shadow of One Religion . . .” (*Bahá'u'lláh—Book of Tablets*, page 54)

Matt. 24:7 “For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

The present state of the world eloquently confirms the truth of these words written so many years ago. Neglect of the prophetic commands and the prevalence of irreligion have been accompanied by disorder and destruction on the most terrible scale.

How fully the following words of Bahá'u'lláh diagnose the condition of the world, bringing to our remembrance the prophecy of Christ, “All these are the beginning of sorrow.”

“The vitality of men’s belief in God,” Bahá'u'lláh has testified, “is dying out in every land; nothing

short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?" "The world is in travail," He has further written, "and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned toward waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 181)

"It should be no exaggeration to say that we are moving into a period which the future historian will regard as one of the most critical in the history of Christianity. . . . 'A wave of materialism is sweeping round the world'; is the testimony of its [Christian] missionaries, as witnessed by the text of their official reports. . . . 'The Church has a new danger to face in land after land—determined and hostile attack. From Soviet Russia a definitely anti-religious Communism is pushing west into Europe and America, East into Persia, India, China and Japan. It is an economic theory, definitely harnessed to disbelief in God. It is a religious irreligion. . . . It has a passionate sense of mission, and is carrying on its anti-God campaign at the Church's base at home, as well as launching its offensive against its front line in non-Christian lands. Such a conscious, avowed, organized attack against religion in general, and Christianity in particular is something new in history. Equally deliberate in some lands in its determined hostility to Christianity is another form of social and political faith—nationalism. But the nationalist attack on Christianity, unlike Communism, is often bound up with some form of national re-

ligion—with Islam in Persia and Egypt, with Buddhism in Ceylon, while the struggle for communal rights in India is allied with a revival both of Hinduism and Islam.” (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 181, 182)

Not only does Bahá'u'lláh diagnose the world's condition, but He also directs the people to the source where the true remedy may be found, even as Christ foretold that there would be a remedy available to His followers who “look up and lift up their heads.”

Luke 21 :28 “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

What other redemption could be more applicable than that given by Bahá'u'lláh, who counsels as follows:

“O people of Bahá! Each one of the revealed commands is a strong fortress for the world” (*Bahá'u'lláh—Book of Tablets*, page 55)

He more fully explains this:

“‘Know thou,’ He, in yet another connection, has written, ‘that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God.’

“No wonder, therefore, that when, as a result of

human perversity, the light of religion is quenched in men's hearts, and the divinely appointed Robe, designed to adorn the human temple, is deliberately discarded, a deplorable decline in the fortunes of humanity immediately sets in, bringing in its wake all the evils which a wayward soul is capable of revealing. The perversion of human nature, the degradation of human conduct, the corruption and dissolution of human institutions, reveal themselves, under such circumstances, in their worst and most revolting aspects. Human character is debased, confidence is shaken, the nerves of discipline are relaxed, the voice of human conscience is stilled, the sense of decency and shame is obscured, conceptions of duty, of solidarity, or reciprocity and loyalty are distorted, and the very feeling of peacefulness, of joy and of hope is gradually extinguished.

"Such, we might well admit, is the state which individuals and institutions alike are approaching. 'No two men,' Bahá'u'lláh lamenting the plight of an erring humanity, has written 'can be found who may be said to be outwardly and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union.' 'How long,' He, in the same Tablet, exclaims, 'Will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing.' " (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 187)

In spite of the conditions foretold by Christ in the words "and then shall many be offended and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another," is it not also true that "when these things begin to come to pass," "your redemption draweth nigh," for we have now given to us such assurance as the following:

"The day will soon come when the light of Divine unity will have so permeated the East and the West that no man dare any longer ignore it.' 'Now in the world of being the Hand of divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the day-spring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that springtide and how heavenly was that gift.'" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 111)

CHAPTER 18

THE WAY TO PEACE

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee.

4. Trust in the Lord forever; for in the Lord is everlasting strength."

Isaiah 32:17 "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

Scientists have devoted an immense amount of study to the struggle for existence in the plant and animal world. Amid the perplexities of social life, many have turned for guidance to the principles which have been found to hold good in the lower world of nature. In this way, they have come to regard rivalry and conflict as necessities of life, and the ruthless killing out of the weaker members of society as a legitimate or even necessary means of improving the race. Bahá'u'lláh tells us, on the other hand, that, if we wish to ascend the scale of progress, instead of looking backward to the animal world, we must direct our gaze forward and upward, and must take not the beasts, but the prophets as our guides. The principles of unity, concord and compassion taught by the prophets are the very antithesis of those dominating the animal struggle for self-preser-

vation, and we must choose between them, for they cannot be reconciled.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

“The law of the survival of the fittest is the origin of all difficulties. It is the cause of war and strife, hatred and animosity, between human beings.

In the world of nature there is tyranny, egoism, aggression, overbearance, usurpation of the rights of others, and other blameworthy attributes which are defects of the animal world. Therefore so long as the requirements of the natural world play paramount part among the children of men, success and prosperity are impossible . . . Nature is warlike, nature is bloodthirsty, nature is tyrannical, NATURE IS UNAWARE OF GOD THE ALMIGHTY. That is why these cruel qualities are natural to the animal world.

“Therefore His Highness the Lord of mankind, having great love and mercy, has caused the appearance of the prophets, and the revelation of the holy books, so that through divine education humanity may be released from the corruption of nature and the darkness of ignorance; be confirmed with ideal virtues, the susceptibilities of consciousness, and spiritual attributes, and become the dawning-place of merciful emotions.” (*Star of the West*, vol. 8, page 15)

“A hundred thousand times, alas! that ignorant prejudice, unnatural differences and antagonistic principles are yet displayed by the nations of the world toward one another, thus causing the retardation of general progress. This retrogression comes

from the fact that the principles of divine civilization are completely abandoned, and the teachings of the prophets are forgotten." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 193)

Suppose European civilization should fall, what nation or race will build the next? If one nation is subject to strife, others become involved and all suffer. The only saving power upon which any nation can depend at present is the nucleus of believers under the guidance of God. Who can imagine that God is withholding such guidance during the world's greatest need?

The willing acceptance by the peoples of the earth of the representative government under the rulership and guidance provided by God will be a glorious democracy. What better "representative" can the nations have to govern them than God who loved the world before the world loved Him, and who knows our every need in advance? Human ways without divine guidance can only lead to ignorance, superstitions, prejudice, war and destruction, whereas the ways of God lead to enlightenment and peace.

When we turn to Bahá'u'lláh for advice and comfort, it is as if God were speaking to us:

"They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. He that turneth away from them, is accounted among the abject and foolish. The seas of Divine wisdom and divine utterance have risen under the

breath of the breeze of the All-Merciful. Hasten to drink your fill, O men of understanding!" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 331)

"Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.'" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 192)

"The time must come,' He, foreshadowing the tentative efforts that are now being made, has written, 'when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace among men . . . Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him.'" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 192)

'Abdu'l-Bahá who is the Center of the Covenant contributes the following for the reorganization of the world:

"True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general

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consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth.' " (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 37)

CHAPTER 19

THE MOST GREAT PEACE

Isaiah 32:18 "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

1 Cor. 14:33 "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

In God's effort to establish peace, there has been opposition from His creatures, so that Bahá'u'lláh has made the following statement on which the lovers of God and of peace have faith:

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem Us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment . . . That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? . . . Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come . . . Is not this that which Christ foretold? Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness

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of mankind. . . . These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family . . . Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind." (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 50)

When people yearn for peace with all their hearts and minds, they will obey the instruction given in the following Psalm:

Psalms 122:6 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.

7. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

The following prayer for the Most Great Peace has been revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, to be used by those who wish universal peace.

PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS

"O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same parents, Thou hast destined that all belong to the same household, and in Thy holy presence all are Thy servants, and all mankind is sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle. Thy children are gathered at Thy table of bounty and have become radiant through the light of Thy providence. O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, Thou dost harbor all. Thou conferest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each humble being with ability and talent and submerged all mankind in the ocean of Thy mercy.

"O Thou generous Lord! Unite Thy servants in every land, suffer the diverse religions to be in harmony, make of the nations a single nation, so they may see

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each other as one family, denizens of one country. May mankind associate with perfect amity and unity.

"O God! Raise the banner of the oneness of humankind. O God! Establish the Most Great Peace. O God! Weld our hearts into one heart. O Thou kind Father! Exhilarate us through the fragrance of Thy love; brighten our eyes through the light of Thy guidance; cheer our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us in the shelter of Thy Providence."

In the most glowing and confident terms, 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures us that this prayer shall be answered, and that the fulfillment of all the prophecies that peace shall be established on earth is at hand:

"But in this marvellous cycle the earth will be transformed, and the world of humanity arrayed in peace and beauty. Disputes, quarrels and murders will be replaced by harmony, truth and concord; among the nations, peoples, races and countries, love and amity will appear. Co-operation and union will be established, and finally war will be entirely suppressed . . . Universal peace will raise its tent in the center of the earth and the Blessed Tree of Life will grow and spread to such an extent that it will overshadow the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, antagonistic sects and hostile nations—which are like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the lion and the calf—will act toward each other with the most complete love, friendship, justice and equity. The world will be filled with science, with the knowledge of the reality of the mysteries of beings, and with the knowledge of God." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 73)

CHAPTER 20

THE PEACE BRINGER

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Christ never referred to Himself as "The Mighty God," the "Everlasting Father," and He did not claim to be the "Prince of Peace" but on the other hand was designated as the Son of God, and specifically stated, as follows:

Luke 12:51 "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division."

Inasmuch as the "Prince of Peace" referred to by Isaiah does not fit Christ, it must refer to His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. Jesus Christ continually spoke of another who would come to usher mankind into the age of peace:

John 16:13 "Howbeit, when He, the spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth, and He shall testify of Me. He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever words He speaks will be given Him

by the Father." (See John 15:26; Acts 3:19-21; Acts 15:16)

The whole world will eventually acknowledge and abide by the leadership of the Father. Every individual who understands Christ is capable of perceiving the Glory of God, the Father.

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has given divine teachings in fuller measure than has ever been given before, having appointed a Guardian to prevent misinterpretation and safeguard the Cause against division for over a thousand years. No past religious dispensation has produced its like. Christ foretold this in the following words:

John 16:25 "These things have I spoken unto you in dark sayings; the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.

26. In that day, ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you;

27. For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father."

Can we not consider this a positive statement that the Father Himself has the power and the love, and therefore will manifest on earth, even as the Son?

Having had foreknowledge of the appearance of this peace bringer, Isaiah poured out thousands of years ago the following song. Now we can join with him in thanksgiving and praise with a full knowledge of what God has wrought through the mani-

festation of His Word on earth—complete instructions for the establishment of the Most Great Peace.

Isaiah 52:7 “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.

8. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

9. Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

13. Behold my servant shall deal prudently. He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.”

CHAPTER 21

THE TRUE SHEPHERD—HIS HOLINESS, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Isaiah 9:2 "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

7. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

True, Christ was a light-bringer and Saviour, but for nearly two thousand years since His appearance, the great majority of the peoples of the earth have continued to walk in darkness, and have continued to groan under the rod of the oppressor. Bahá'u'lláh, dealing at great length in his writings with questions of government and administration, and showing how they may best be solved, has "taken the government upon his shoulder" in a way that Christ never did.

Isaiah 11:1 "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. . . .

9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

"This rod out of the stem of Jesse might be correctly applied to Christ, for Joseph was of the descendants of Jesse the father of David; but as Christ found existence through the Spirit of God, he called himself the Son of God. If he had not done so, this description would refer to him." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 73)

Neither does the 9th verse saying "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," describe the condition of the world at the time of Christ. Not until the appearance of

Bahá'u'lláh, less than one hundred years ago, has the earth increased in education, science and knowledge. Since that time it has increased as never before in the history of the world and the writings of Bahá'u'lláh are deluging the earth with a flood of the knowledge of the Lord.

Dan. 7:13 "And I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him.

14. And it was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

This description of the Messiah given by Daniel fits no former Manifestation of God, but does describe the "Glory of God," His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh, and what is destined to result from His leadership and spiritual power, i.e., the Kingdom of peace on earth which shall never be destroyed.

Isaiah 42:13 "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man. He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war. He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies."

The writings of Bahá'u'lláh in calling the people to the Kingdom of the Father are as "roarings" compared to former prophets, saints and saviours who have successively come to earth to teach man-

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kind how to worship and obey God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá
likewise declares:

"So loud is the call that reverberates from the Abhá Kingdom that mortal ears are well-nigh deafened with its vibrations. The whole creation, methinks, is being disrupted and is bursting asunder through the shattering influence of the Divine summons issued from the throne of glory." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 112)

"O people of religions! We see you wandering erringly in the waterless desert of loss; ye are the fish of this sea, why are ye withheld from your creator? Verily the Sea is raging before your faces, hasten unto Him from all regions. This is a day wherein the Rock (Peter) crieth out and praiseth in the Name of the Lord, the Exalted, the Independent, saying, Lo, the Father hath come and what hath been promised unto you in the Kingdom is accomplished; this is the word which was concealed behind the veil of might, and when the promised time came, it shone forth from the horizon of the Primal Will with manifest signs. My body was imprisoned to set you free, and We accepted humiliation for the sake of your glory; follow the Lord, the Lord of Glory and Kingdom and follow not every proud infidel." (*Bahá'i Scriptures—Tablet to the Pope*, page 100)

The following was written some time after Christ's first appearance. Therefore could it refer to any other than the future Christ spirit manifesting as the Father?

Col. 3:4 "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Bahá'u'lláh calls attention to the glory of this appearance in the following words :

"O concourse of learned people ! Open your eyes that you may see your Lord sitting on the Throne of glory and might. Say, O people of Religions ! Be not of those who follow the Pharisees and thus they were veiled from the Spirit. Verily they are not but in forgetfulness and lusts. The perfection of the Ancient hath come by His Most Mighty Name and hath desired to make the people enter into the Most Holy Kingdom, and that the sincere may see the Kingdom of God before His Face. Hasten unto Him and follow not every denying infidel. And if the eye of any one oppose him in this, it behooveth him to pluck it out. Thus was it written by the Pen of Eternity on the part of the King of the contingent beings ; verily, He hath come another time for your deliverance. O people of creation, will ye kill Him after that He desireth for you eternal life ?" (*Bahá'í Scriptures—Tablet to the Pope*, pages 103, 104)

There are many passages found in the Bible regarding the second coming of Christ in the Glory of the Father, and we quote herein only a few of the outstanding ones to refresh the minds of Christians that they may compare these words of fore-knowledge with present day events.

1 Tim. 6:13 "I give thee charge, in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ

Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession:

14. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord, Jesus Christ:

15. Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords.

16. Who hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting, Amen."

How similar to the above are the hopeful, merciful and exhilarating words of Bahá'u'lláh:

"We have created you for the light, and We do not like to leave you for the fire, O people. Come out from darkness through this Sun which has shone forth from the horizon of the grace of God; then advance unto Him with purified hearts and assured souls, seeing eyes and bright faces.

"This is that whereby the King of Fate admonisheth you, from the region of the Most Great Outlook, that ye may be attracted by the Voice to the Kingdom of Names. Blessed is he who fulfilleth the Covenant, and woe unto him who breaketh the promise and denieth God the Knower of secrets. Say, Lo! This is the Day of Grace! Come ye that I may make you kings of the realm of My Kingdom." (*Bahá'í Scriptures—Tablet to the Pope*, pages 103, 104)

GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER—FORETOLD

How significant it is that the words in the Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh to the Pope are in agreement with the following words of the Book of Revelation:

Rev. 5:9 "And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation;

10. And hast made us unto our God, Kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

Continuing with the Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh:

"If ye obey Me you will see that which We have promised you, and I will make you the friends of My Soul in the realm of My Greatness and the Companions of My Perfection in the heaven of My Might forever. And if ye disobey Me, I will be patient through My Mercy, perchance that ye will awake and arise from the bed of negligence, thus hath My forbearance preceded you.

"Fear God and follow not those who have turned away from His Face while they call upon Him at eventide and dawn. Verily the Harvest Day hath come and things are separated, that which was chosen is stored in the vessels of justice and into the fire was cast what was fitted for it. Thus hath decided thy Lord, the Mighty, the Beloved, in this Promised Day, verily He is the Ruler over that which He willeth, and there is no God but He, the Mighty, the Subduer!" (*Bahá'í Scriptures—Tablet to the Pope*, pages 103, 104)

"Say, O people of the Gospel (Christians), We have revealed Ourselves unto you on a previous oc-

casion and ye did not know Me. This is another time, this is the Day of God, come unto Him, verily He hath come from heaven as He came from it the first time and desired to shelter you under the shadow of His Mercy. Verily He is the Exalted, the Mighty, the Defender. Verily, the Beloved doth not like you to be burned in the fire of passion, and even were ye veiled it will not be but from your neglectfulness and lack of knowledge. You mention Me and do not know Me; ye call upon Me and overlook My appearance after I have come unto you from the heaven of eternity with My Glory the Most Great. Burn the veils in My name and dominion that ye may find a way to the Lord. The Glorious One crieth continually from the horizon of the Pavilion of Might and Greatness saying, 'O people of the Gospel! He hath come into the Kingdom who was out of it and today We see you tarrying at the Gate; rend the veils by the Power of your Lord, the Mighty, the Munificent, and then enter my Kingdom in My Name; thus doth He who desireth for you everlasting life, command you. Verily He is the powerful over all things.' ” (*Bahá'í Scriptures—Tablet to the Pope*, pages 103, 104)

The love of God will be made evident when His chosen shall see Him as He is, and shall be made like Him provided they meet the requirement of purification.

1 John 3:1 “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God; Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.

2. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see Him as He is.

3. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

"Through the power of the words He hath uttered the whole of the human race can be illumined with the light of unity, and the remembrance of His Name is able to set on fire the hearts of ALL men, and burn away the veils that intervene between them and His glory." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 286)

Such words as the following flooding the world with light is positive proof that "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

"Blessed are they who have known the light and hastened toward it. Behold! They are in the Kingdom, they eat and drink with the elect.—And We see you, O children of the Kingdom in darkness—this is not meet for you. Do ye fear to confront the light because of your deeds? Advance thereunto, verily thy Glorious Lord hath honored His country by His coming, thus We teach you the path whereof the Spirit (Christ) hath declared;—verily I bear witness for Him as He was indeed a witness for Me." (*Bahá'i Scriptures—Tablet to the Pope*, pages 103, 104)

THE TRUE SHEPHERD—HIS HOLINESS, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The very quotation regarding the witness for Christ, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the above passage, follows:

1 John 5:9 "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."

John 15:26 "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me."

The use of the word "He" indicating the gender of the witness-bearer for Christ, shows that this witness shall be in the form of a man who is the personification of truth, rather than in the form of an invisible spirit. When Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, walked upon the earth, He was endowed with this spirit of truth from the Father, and thus did testify of the Son, as shown in the above quotation from His writings.

(Also see Chapter 12, Page 69 regarding the Son witnessing for the Father, and the Father witnessing for the Son.)

CHAPTER 22

PERSECUTION OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD

Isaiah 30:9 "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.

10. Which say to the seers 'see not,' and to the prophets, 'prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits;

11. Get thee out of the way; turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.'

12. 'Wherefore,' thus saith the Holy One of Israel; 'because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness and stay thereon;

13. Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, bulging out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant.'"

Instead of heeding the word of life and light given by God through His Manifestation in human form, the people request "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." (Isaiah 30:11) and instead of looking to the Holy One, they send their ambassadors to seek help of the worldly ones, and put their trust in chariots and horsemen (Isaiah 31:1) leading to travail and woe.

Luke 6:26 "Woe unto you when men shall speak well of you: for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

Matt. 23:29 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous.

30. And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets.

32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?

34. Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.

35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not:

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."

Matt. 10:25 "If they have called the master of the house Belzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!

26. Fear them not therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known.

27. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the house-tops.

28. And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

"Ponder a while. What is it that prompted, in every Dispensation, the peoples of the earth to shun the Manifestation of the All-Merciful? What could have impelled them to turn away from Him and to challenge His authority? . . . [The answer to this question is found nowhere except in the Bahá'í teachings which are self-explanatory:]

"It is the veil of idle imaginations which, in the days of the Manifestations of the Unity of God and the Day Springs of His everlasting glory, hath intervened, and will continue to intervene, between them and the rest of mankind. For in those days, He Who is the Eternal Truth manifested Himself in conformity with that which He Himself hath purposed, and NOT according to the desires and expectations of man. Even as He hath revealed: 'So oft, then, as an Apostle cometh to you with that which your souls desire not, do ye swell with pride, and treat some as impostors and slay others.'" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 82)

"The great prophets of religion and science have never denounced each other. It is the unworthy followers of these great world-teachers—worshippers of the letter but not of the spirit of their teaching—

who have always been the persecutors of the later prophets and the bitterest opponents of progress. They have studied the light of the particular revelation which they hold sacred, and have defined its properties and peculiarities as seen by their limited vision, with the utmost care and precision . . . If God in His infinite bounty sends fuller light from another quarter, and the torch of inspiration burns brighter than before from a new torch-holder, instead of welcoming the new light and worshipping with renewed gratitude the Father of all lights they are angry and alarmed. This new light does not correspond with their definitions. It has not the orthodox color, and does not shine from the orthodox place, therefore it must at all costs be extinguished lest it lead men astray into the paths of heresy! Many enemies of the prophets are of this type—blind leaders of the blind, who oppose new and fuller truth in the supposed interests of what they believe to be *the* truth. Others are of baser sort and are moved by selfish interests to fight against truth, or else block the path of progress by reason of spiritual deadness and inertia.” (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 240)

“Consider the past. How many, both high and low, have, at all times, yearningly awaited the advent of the Manifestations of God in the sanctified persons of His chosen Ones. How often have they expected His coming, how frequently have they prayed that the breeze of Divine mercy might blow, and the promised Beauty step forth from behind the veil of concealment, and be made manifest to all the world. And whensoever the portals of grace did open, and the clouds of divine bounty did rain upon

mankind, and the light of the Unseen did shine above the horizon of celestial might, they all denied Him, and turned away from His face—the face of God Himself . . .

“Reflect, what could have been the motive for such deeds? What could have prompted such behaviour towards the Revealers of the beauty of the All-Glorious? Whatever in days gone by hath been the cause of the denial and opposition of those people hath now led to the perversity of the people of this age.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 17)

“Consider these martyrs of unquestionable sincerity, to whose truthfulness testifieth the explicit text of the Book, and all of whom, as thou hast witnessed, have sacrificed their life, their substance, their wives, their children, their all, and ascended unto the loftiest chambers of Paradise. Is it fair to reject the testimony of these detached and exalted beings to the truth of this pre-eminent and Glorious Revelation, and to regard as acceptable the denunciations which have been uttered against this resplendent Light by this faithless people, who for gold have forsaken their faith, and who for the sake of leadership have repudiated Him Who is the First Leader of all mankind?” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 182)

Isaiah 26:10 “Let favor be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.”

“O Jews! If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He

hath once more, in My person been made manifest unto you . . . Followers of the Gospel! If ye cherish the desire to slay Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, seize Me and put an end to My life, for I am He, and My Self is His Self . . . Followers of Muḥammad! If it be your wish to riddle with your shafts the breast of Him Who hath caused His Book the Bayán to be sent down unto you, lay hands on Me and persecute Me, for I am His Well-Beloved, the revelation of His own Self, though My name be not His name. I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. I, verily, anticipate from you the treatment ye have accorded unto Him that came before Me. To this all things, verily, witness, if ye be of those who hearken. O people of the Bayán! If ye have resolved to shed the blood of Him Whose coming the Báb hath proclaimed, Whose advent Muḥammad hath prophesied, and Whose Revelation Jesus Christ Himself hath announced, behold Me standing, ready and defenseless, before you. Deal with Me after your own desires.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, page 101)

“The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath wished nothing for Himself. The allegiance of mankind profiteth Him not, neither doth its perversity harm Him. The Bird of the Realm of Utterance voiceth continually this call: ‘All things have I willed for thee, and thee, too, for thine own sake.’” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, page 260)

“‘Give heed to my warning, ye people of Persia,’ He [Bahá’u’lláh] thus addressed His countrymen.

'If I be slain at your hands, God will assuredly raise up one who will fill the seat made vacant through my death; for such is God's method carried into effect of old, and no change can ye find in God's mode of dealing. Should they attempt to conceal His light on the continent, He will assuredly rear His head in the midmost heart of the ocean and, raising His voice, proclaim: 'I am the lifegiver of the world!' . . . And if they cast Him into a darksome pit, they will find Him seated on earth's loftiest heights calling aloud to all mankind: 'lo, the Desire of the world is come in His majesty, His sovereignty, His transcendent dominion!' And if He be buried beneath the depths of the earth, His Spirit soaring to the apex of heaven shall peal the summons: 'Behold ye the coming of the Glory; witness ye the Kingdom of God, the most Holy, the Gracious, the All-Powerful!'" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 108)

CHAPTER 23

BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND

Matt. 15:14 "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind, And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

God, through Isaiah, foretold the condition of religious leaders who are called watchmen. Although watching for the Messiah, they do not understand the true meaning of the prophecies, and do not seek to become informed.

Isaiah 56:10 "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs. They cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

11. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter."

This prophecy of Isaiah bears evidence that it refers to the time of the end. Jesus similarly chided religious leaders of His dispensation, as follows:

Matt. 23:4 "Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger.

5. But all their works they do to be seen of men; for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the chief place of feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues and the salutations in the market-places, and to be called of men 'Rabbi.'

13. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.

15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves."

Luke 19:45 "And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought.

46. Saying unto them, it is written My house is the house of prayer; and ye have made it a den of thieves.

47. And he taught daily in the temple, but the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy him."

Matt. 23:23 "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye tithe mint, and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy, and faith; but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.

24. Ye blind guides that strain at the gnat, and swallow the camel!

25. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. For ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess.

BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND

26. Thou blind Pharisees, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.

27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

In every age, the clergy have had a tendency to become indifferent and allow religion to degenerate into an elaborate ceremony, but prophecy clearly states that there will be a time when God will change these conditions and will set up one shepherd who will teach, lead and feed the flocks with justice, and all will arise out of their sepulchres of materialism and injustice into the spiritual vibration of awareness of divine law and feed in peace upon the true bread of life. What could be more plain than the following prophecy:

Ezekiel 34:2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

10. Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

11. For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will search my sheep, and seek them out.

16. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and strong; I will feed them with judgment.

23. I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David; He shall feed them, for He shall be my shepherd.

24. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

28. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid."

Note: (Ezekiel lived about 600 B.C. and King David about 1000 B.C. Therefore it is evident that Ezekiel does not refer to David, the son of Jesse and father of Solomon. Neither does he refer to Christ, although David was the ancestor of Joseph, the husband of Mary, Christ's mother, yet Christ was the "Son of God." Bahá'u'lláh is spoken of as the "Son of Man" and inasmuch as Ezekiel designates it as a time of peace when "they shall no more be a prey to the heathen," and "none shall make them afraid," it would be safe to interpret the above passage as a prophecy pertaining to the time of the end.)

Luke 18:8 "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Christ is here referring to the coming of another manifestation of God, "The Son of man," who will come in the "Glory of the Father," i.e. Bahá'u'lláh, who again warns any shepherds who are heedless and hypocritical, with these words:

"O ye that are foolish yet have a name to be wise!

Wherefore do ye wear the guise of shepherds when inwardly ye have become wolves, intent upon My flock? Ye are even as the star, which riseth ere the dawn, and which, though it seem radiant and luminous, leadeth the wayfarers of My city astray into the paths of perdition." (*Persian Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*, No. 24)

"Say: O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it . . .

"O ye leaders of religion! Who is the man amongst you that can rival Me in vision or insight? Where is he to be found that dareth to claim to be My equal in utterance or wisdom? No, by My Lord, the All-Merciful! All on the earth shall pass away; and this is the face of your Lord, the Almighty, the Well-Beloved.

"We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge; and yet, behold how ye have allowed your learning to shut you out, as by a veil, from Him Who is the Day Spring of

this Light, through Whom every hidden thing hath been revealed. Could ye but discover the source whence the splendor of this utterance is diffused, ye would cast away the peoples of the world and all that they possess, and would draw nigh unto this most blessed Seat of glory . . .

“We have not entered any school, nor read any of your dissertations. Incline your ears to the words of this unlettered One, wherewith He summoneth you unto God, the Ever-Abiding. Better is this for you than all the treasures of the earth, could ye but comprehend it.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 198, 199)

What will happen in that day when the Lord alone shall be exalted? “Thus saith the Lord God, ‘Behold, I, even I will search my sheep and seek them out.’ ” This means that in the latter days, in order to clear the obstacles which stand in the way of world peace, through the power of God, all authority other than God’s, and all misrule will be abolished. No more shall Pharisees strain at the gnat and swallow the camel, but the sanctuary shall be permanently cleansed by the power of God. The time is rapidly approaching when the prophetic words of Jeremiah will be actually fulfilled:

Jer. 25:35 “And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.

36. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard; for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture.”

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The true shepherds, who, up to this time have been leading God's people and sincerely desiring the greatest good and happiness for the world will rejoice and join with the members of their congregations to cooperate with God's plan for the establishment of an era of one thousand years of peace. The recognition of the Holy One, and the establishment of His kingdom on earth is the only way by which hypocrites may be separated from the righteous, and in this process there have been many, and will continue to be many more, who will turn completely to God and abide by the requirements prescribed by the Divine physician which are necessary to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, as foretold. Clergymen should rejoice, as the dispensation of one thousand years of peace will be far superior, both spiritually and materially, to anything the world has ever known. We are told, however, that some shepherds will join forces to try to overcome the power of God; but who would want to be so blind as to follow the blind and come to regret and loss? Isaiah describes this condition as follows:

Isaiah 31:4 "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as a lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

5. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

6. Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted."

In explanation of verse 6 of the above quotation, it is well known that the reality of Christ is fully explained by Bahá'u'lláh, so that before a Jew can become a Bahá'í, he must acknowledge the divinity of Christ, for until that is done, it will be impossible for him to acknowledge the divinity of Bahá'u'lláh, as they are one and the same in spirit, although Their physical bodies were different. The children of Israel have deeply revolted against Christ, but in turning to Him, they will win the favor of the Father, again.

There is nothing to fear for those who are pure in heart, and who turn their faces to God. The beloved Guardian of the Bahá'í faith, has written as follows:

"The Revelation of which Bahá'u'lláh is the source and center, abrogates none of the religions which have preceded it, nor does it attempt, in the slightest degree, to distort their features or to belittle their value. It disclaims any intention of dwarfing any of the Prophets of the past, or of whittling down the eternal verity of Their teachings. It can, in no wise, conflict with the spirit that animates Their claims, nor does it seek to undermine the basis of any man's allegiance to Their cause. Its declared, its primary purpose, is to enable every adherent of these Faiths to obtain a fuller understanding of the religion with which he stands identified, and to acquire a clearer apprehension of its purpose. It is neither eclectic in the presentation of its truths, nor arrogant

in the affirmation of its claims. Its teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is progressive, not final. Unequivocally and without the least reservation it proclaims all established religions to be divine in origin, identical in their aims, complementary in their functions, continuous in their purpose, indispensable in their value to mankind . . . To contend that any particular religion is final, that 'all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the Tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest' would indeed be nothing less than sheer blasphemy." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 57, 58)

"Who, contemplating the helplessness, the fears and miseries of humanity in this day, can any longer question the necessity for a fresh revelation of the quickening power of God's redemptive love and guidance? Who . . . can be so blind as to doubt that the hour has at last struck for the advent of a new Revelation, for a re-statement of the Divine Purpose, and for the consequent revival of those spiritual forces that have, at fixed intervals, rehabilitated the fortunes of human society? Does not the very operation of the world-unifying forces that are at work in this age necessitate that He Who is the Bearer of the Message of God in this day should not only reaffirm that self-same exalted standard of individual conduct inculcated by the Prophets gone before Him, but embody in His appeal, to all governments and peoples, the essentials of that social code,

that Divine Economy, which must guide humanity's concerted efforts in establishing that all-embracing federation which is to signalize the advent of the Kingdom of God on this earth?" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 60, 61)

"Alone of all the Revelations gone before it this Faith has . . . succeeded in raising a structure which the bewildered followers of bankrupt and broken creeds might well approach and critically examine, and seek, ere it is too late, the invulnerable security of its world-embracing shelter . . .

"To what else if not to the power and majesty which this Administrative Order—the rudiments of the future all-enfolding Bahá'í Commonwealth—is destined to manifest, can these utterances of Bahá'u'lláh allude: 'The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.' " (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 146)

CHAPTER 24

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH

Matt. 23:8 "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren.

9. And call no man your Father, for one is your Father, even He who is in heaven.

10. Neither be Ye called Masters; for one is your master, even the Christ.

11. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted."

The above teaching is in accord with the Bahá'í principles, although not in accord with present customs. No one should consider himself superior by being a Rabbi, Father, or Master as in the past, as the Lord only shall be exalted in this day.

Bahá'u'lláh constantly urges men to realize and give full expression to the perfections latent within them—the true inner self as distinguished from the limited outer self, which at best is but the temple, and too often is the prison of the real man. In the "Hidden Words," He says:—

"O Song of Being!

"With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within

thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, nor have a doubt thereof."

"O Son of Spirit!

"I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone besides Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful, and self-subsisting." (*Arabic Hidden Words*, Nos. 12-13)

The life to which Bahá'u'lláh calls his followers is surely one of such nobility that in all the vast range of human possibility there is nothing more lofty or beautiful to which man could aspire. Realization of spiritual life means realization of the sublime truth that we are from God and to Him we shall return. This return to God is the glorious goal of the Bahá'í, whether attained on earth or in heaven—the sooner we reach this goal in any realm, the better, and to attain this goal, the path is that of obedience to and love for His chosen Messengers of the past and present.

"O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would

gain a true knowledge of your own selves—a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 326)

“Say! The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth. This is verily, an evidence of His tender mercy unto men. *He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God.* How could He, otherwise, have fulfilled His testimony unto men, if ye be of them that ponder His Cause in their hearts. He will never deal unjustly with any one, neither will He task a soul beyond its power. He, verily, is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 105)

“Purge your sight, that ye may perceive [the Day-Star of Glory] with your own eyes, and depend not on the sight of any one except your Self, for God hath never burdened any soul beyond its power. Thus hath it been sent down unto the Prophets and Messengers of old, and been recorded in all the Scriptures.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 106)

“First and foremost among these favors, which the Almighty hath conferred upon man, is the gift

of understanding. His purpose in conferring such a gift is none other except to enable His creatures to know and recognize the one true God—exalted be His glory. This gift giveth man the power to discern the truth in all things, leadeth him to that which is right, and helpeth him to discover the secrets of creation. Next in rank, is the power of vision, the chief instrument whereby his understanding can function. The senses of hearing, of the heart, and the like, are similarly to be reckoned among the gifts with which the human body is endowed. Immeasurably exalted is the Almighty Who hath created these powers, and revealed them in the body of man. . . .

“That which is pre-eminent above all other gifts is incorruptible in nature, and pertaineth to God Himself, is the gift of Divine Revelation. Every bounty conferred by the Creator upon man, be it material or spiritual, is subservient unto this. It is, in its essence, and will ever so remain, the Bread which cometh down from Heaven. It is God’s supreme testimony, the clearest evidence of His truth, the sign of His consummate bounty, the token of His all-encompassing mercy, the proof of His most loving providence, the symbol of His most perfect grace. He hath, indeed, partaken of this highest gift of God who hath recognized His Manifestation in this Day.

“Render thanks unto thy Lord for having vouchsafed unto thee so great a bounty. Lift up thy voice and say: All praise be to Thee, O Thou, the Desire of every understanding heart!” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, pages 194, 195)

“Tear asunder, in My Name, the veils that have grievously blinded your vision, and, through the

power born of your belief in the unity of God, scatter the idols of vain imitation . . .

"If, in the Day when all the peoples of the earth will be gathered together, any man should, whilst standing in the presence of God, be asked: 'Wherefore hast thou disbelieved in My Beauty, and turned away from My Self,' and if such a man should reply and say: 'Inasmuch as all men have erred, and none hath been found willing to turn his face to the Truth, I, too, following their example, have grievously failed to recognize the Beauty of the Eternal,' such a plea will, assuredly, be rejected. For the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 143)

"Verily He said 'Come, that I may make you fishers of men,' and today We say 'Come that We may make you vivifiers of the world.' Thus was the decree ordained in the Tablet written by the Pen of Command" (*Bahá'í Scriptures*, Tablet to the Pope, page 104)

Every Bahá'í, in addition to his regular occupation by which he earns a living, is expected to share in the work of teaching, and thus "vivify the world." Paul earned his living as a tent-maker, Christ as a carpenter, and Peter as a fisherman. Therefore, in the Bahá'í organization, there is no professional priesthood. Voluntary contributions towards the expenses of a teacher are sometimes permitted.

In former ages priesthoods were necessary because people were illiterate and uneducated and were dependent on priests for their religious instruction,

administration of justice, etc. Now, however, times have changed. Education is fast becoming universal and when the commands of Bahá'u'lláh are carried out, every boy and girl in the world will receive a thorough education. Each individual will then be able to study the Scriptures for himself and draw the Water of Life for himself direct from the Fountainhead. Elaborate rites and ceremonies requiring the services of a special profession have no place in the Bahá'í system; and the administration of justice is entrusted to the authorities instituted for that purpose.

For a child, a teacher is necessary, but the aim of the true teacher is to fit the pupil to do without a teacher; to see things with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and understand with his own mind. Just so, in the childhood of the race, the priest is necessary, but his real work is to enable men to do without him. Now the priest's work is accomplished, and the fullness of the Revelation of the Father in Heaven is sufficient to make men independent of all save God, so that they can turn directly to His Manifestation for all knowledge and guidance. When all turn to one Center, then there can be no cross-purposes or confusion and the nearer all draw to the Center, the nearer they will draw to each other.

Isaiah 52:8 "Thy watchman shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

CHAPTER 25

THE RESURRECTION

1 Cor. 15:51-54 "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortality must put on immortality."

As to the meaning of these passages about the raising of the dead, Bahá'u'lláh writes in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*:

"By the term 'life' and 'death', spoken of in the Scriptures, is intended the life of faith and the death of unbelief. The generality of the people, owing to their failure to grasp the meaning of these words, rejected and despised the person of the Manifestation, deprived themselves of the light of His divine guidance, and refused to follow the example of that immortal Beauty." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 114)

"Jesus said: 'Ye must be born again.' [John 3:7] Again He saith: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' [John 3:5-6] The purport of these words is that whoso-

ever in every dispensation is born of the Spirit and is quickened by the breath of the Manifestation of Holiness, he verily is of those that have attained unto 'life' and 'resurrection' and have entered into the 'paradise' of the love of God. And whosoever is not of them, is condemned to 'death' and 'deprivation', to the 'fire' of unbelief, and to the 'wrath' of God." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 118)

"In every age and century, the purpose of the Prophets of God and their chosen ones hath been no other than to affirm the spiritual significance of the terms 'life', 'resurrection', and 'judgment' . . . Wert thou to attain to but a dewdrop of the crystal waters of divine knowledge, thou wouldst readily realize that true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit. For the life of the flesh is common to both men and animals, whereas the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith and partaken of the fruit of certitude. This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality. Even as it hath been said: 'He who is a true believer liveth both in this world and in the world to come.' If by 'life' be meant this earthly life, it is evident that death must needs overtake it." (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 120)

Just as the sun's rays at the vernal equinox have power to quicken apparently dead seeds and roots, dormant throughout winter, so do the prophets and manifestations of God have power to quicken man spiritually. This quickening increases a desire for the knowledge of God, leading to resurrection and everlasting life.

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Christ taught more briefly, although in exact accord with the clear language of Bahá'u'lláh regarding the true meaning of death, resurrection and life, saying that when the dead in their graves shall hear the voice of God, they shall come forth into the resurrection of life. This, of course, means into everlasting life of the spirit, and not the transient life of the corporeal body.

John 5:21 "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words and believest on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life.

25. Verily, I say unto you the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.

26. For the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.

27. And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. [This refers to 'Son of man' and not to Himself as 'Son of God' as used in verse 25.]

28. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming [meaning the future] when the dead that are in the graves shall hear His voice. [Christ did not say Shall hear 'My voice,' but shall hear 'His voice.']

29. And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER—FORETOLD

After the corporeal body has passed on, judgment can only be made of the soul, and therefore resurrection means into the spiritual realm, and not again into the corruption of constantly disintegrating physical life. Another proof of this is the following:

Matt. 22:31 "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God saying:

32. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Although their physical bodies are in the graves, yet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are living in the Kingdom of God, the heaven of reality. Resurrection is the birth into the reality of spiritual life through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The grave from which the resurrection takes place is the darkness of ignorance and negligence of the knowledge of God, or the condition of mere animal existence.

The Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh written to the Pope, to the Shah of Persia, to the Sultan of Turkey, to the Czar, to America, to the Christians, and to the Jews, are powerful trumpet blasts, loud enough to awaken those who are spiritually asleep or dead in the sepulcher of the flesh.

"Speed out of your sepulchers. How long will ye sleep? The second blast hath been blown on the trumpet. On whom are ye gazing? This is your Lord, the God of Mercy. Witness how ye gainsay His signs! The earth quaked with a great quaking and

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cast forth her burdens. Will ye not admit it? Say: Will ye not recognize how the mountains have become like flocks of wool, how the people are sore vexed at the awful majesty of the Cause of God? Witness how their houses are empty ruins, and they themselves a drowned host." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 44)

"Say! Is there any doubt concerning God? Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs? Open ye your eyes, and consider His clear evidence. Paradise is on your right hand, and hath been brought nigh unto you, while Hell hath been made to blaze. Witness its devouring flame. Haste ye to enter into Paradise, as a token of Our mercy unto you, and drink ye from the hands of the All-Merciful the Wine that is life indeed." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 45, 46)

It is marvelous how the writings of Bahá'u'lláh in this day conform with every text found in the holy writings of old. Both Paradise and Hell were to be competing in this day for the favor of men, foretold in the last chapter of the Bible herewith quoted:

Rev. 20:4 ". . . I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until

the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6. Blessed and holy is He that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

The above prophecy finds its fulfillment in the present century as we listen to the sweet words of the following melody:

"Incline your ears to the sweet melody of this prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices, that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been re-born in this Day, shall never die; whoso remaineth dead, shall never live." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 213)

"Follow the path of the Lord, and follow not the heedless. Blessed is the sleeper who will awaken by these powers and will stand up among the dead, directing himself in the path of the Lord; verily, he is of the essence of the creatures before the True One, and verily, he is of those who have attained." (*Bahá'i Scriptures, Excerpt from Tablet to the Christians*, pages 126, 127)

"Whoso hath been quickened by its vitalizing power, will find himself impelled to attain the court of the Beloved; and whoso hath deprived himself therefrom, will sink into irretrievable despondency.

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He is truly wise whom the world and all that is therein have not deterred from recognizing the light of this Day, who will not allow men's idle talk to cause him to swerve from the way of righteousness. He is indeed as one dead who, at the wondrous dawn of this Revelation, hath failed to be quickened by its soul-stirring breeze. He is indeed a captive who hath not recognized the Supreme Redeemer, but hath suffered his soul to be bound, distressed and helpless, in the fetters of his desires." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 168, 169)

There is joy and happiness in the knowledge of God, and in drawing near to Him, and those who do not awaken at this trumpet call of Bahá'u'lláh, which has already penetrated the remotest parts of the earth, are past recall. These unfortunate sleeping or dead souls dwelling in the sepulchers of the flesh will be given another chance at the end of the thousand years of peace and advancement, and have a share in the knowledge and sovereignty of God. Who would choose to remain in the grave of unbelief while others are living in the brightness of God's Glory?

The death of the soul is a great tragedy, while death to the mortal body is only an incident in the greater life of eternity. It is for the awakening of "dead" souls of those who are physically alive that the manifestations of God regularly come to earth, which is like the coming of spring, except that the spiritual springtime moves in a greater cycle of time than the cycle required for the vegetable kingdom,

for it is stated that a thousand years is but one day with the Lord.

“ ‘The Call of God,’ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written, ‘when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world hath been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men have quickened. Erelong the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened.’ ” (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 169)

It is much greater to revive a soul from everlasting death than it is to restore a physical body from death for only a few more years. All physical bodies being composed of elements must eventually decompose, but the soul is not composed of elements. It is complete—whole within itself—thus the soul does not disintegrate, but is everlasting. The only way a soul dies is by denial of its creator and willful rejection of our Father’s love when He manifests His Word on earth in human form.

“ ‘Through the movement of Our pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame and instilled into every word a fresh potency.’ . . . ‘Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation—a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save

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God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.' ”
(*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 107)

John 5:28 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

1 Cor. 15:53: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortality must put on immortality.”

CHAPTER 26

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Matt. 16:27 "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works."

Daniel 12:1 "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book.

2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting condemnation."

The Day of Judgment of which Christ speaks is identical with the coming of the Lord of Hosts, the Father, which was prophesied by Isaiah and others; a time of terrible punishment for the wicked, but a time in which justice shall be established and righteousness rule on earth as in heaven.

According to Bahá'í interpretation, the coming of each Manifestation of God is a Day of Judgment, but the coming of the supreme Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh is the Great Day of Judgment for the world-cycle in which we are living. The trumpet-blast of which Christ and Muḥammad and many

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other prophets speak, is the call of the Manifestation, which is sounded for all who are in heaven and on earth. The meeting with God, through His Manifestation, is, for those who desire to meet Him, the gateway to the Paradise of knowing and loving Him, and living in peace with all His creation. Those, on the other hand, who do not believe in God's Manifestations but trust themselves instead, consign themselves to the hell of error and remoteness from the Father's Kingdom.

Matt. 13:40 "so shall it be at the end of the world.

41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ;

42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The phrase "end of the world" used by the authorized version of the Bible in this and similar passages has led many to suppose that when the Day of Judgment comes, the earth will suddenly be destroyed, but this is a mistake. The true translation of the phrase appears to be "the consummation or end of the age." Christ taught that the Kingdom of the Father is to be established on earth, as well as in heaven. He teaches us to pray "Thy Kingdom come ; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In the parable of the Vineyard, when the Father, the Lord of the Vineyard comes to destroy the wicked

husbandmen, he does not destroy the vineyard (the world) also, but lets it out to other husbandmen, who will render Him the fruits in their season. The earth is not to be destroyed, but to be renewed and regenerated.

St. Peter speaks of this renewal and regeneration as "the times of refreshing" which God had spoken by the mouth of His Holy Prophets since the world began.

Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord:

20. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.

22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23. And it shall come to pass that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."

Christ did not claim to be the "judge" who was to come with the power of God in the latter days to separate the righteous from the unrighteous, for Christ declared:

John 12:47-48 "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

The prophets, including Christ, all point to the consummation of all religions into One fold and One

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shepherd—the goal of religion—just as fruit is the result of bud and blossom, but before fruit appears, the blossom drops off. The lesser gives way to the greater.

The final judge is the Father, Bahá'u'lláh. According to a parable of Christ, the Lord of the vineyard must miserably destroy the wicked husbandmen before He gives the vineyard to others who will render Him the fruits in their seasons. This means that at the coming of the Lord, dire destruction awaits those despotic governments, avaricious and intolerant priests, mullas, or tyrannical leaders who through the centuries have, like wicked husbandmen, misruled the earth, and misappropriated its fruits.

“There may be terrible events and unparalleled calamities yet awhile on the earth, but Bahá'u'lláh assures us ‘that ere long, these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come.’ War and strife have become so intolerable in their destructiveness that mankind MUST find deliverance from them or perish.

‘The fulness of time’ has come and with it, the Promised Deliverer!” (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, page 59)

Never before the present time with the use of bombs, aeroplanes and modern warfare could a quick destruction be made of fortified cities and high towers. Destruction will continue, as foretold, until humanity unanimously awakens to the fact that there is a oneness in mankind and that the Father's Kingdom is ready and waiting, and can be realized as

soon as the inhabitants of the earth are willing to acknowledge that "God alone shall be exalted in this day."

"This is the Day whereon the All-Merciful hath come down in the clouds of knowledge, clothed with manifest sovereignty. He well knoweth the actions of men. He it is Whose Glory none can mistake, could ye but comprehend it. The heaven of every religion hath been rent, and the earth of human understanding been cleft asunder, and the angels of God are seen descending. Say: This is the Day of mutual deceit; whither do ye flee? The mountains have passed away, and the heavens have been folded together, and the whole earth is held within His grasp, could ye but understand it. Who is it that can protect you? None, by Him Who is the All-Merciful! None, except God, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Beneficent . . . We see men drunken in this Day, the Day in which men and angels have been gathered together." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 45)

Prophecy declares that God's judgment will be just, and our punishment according to our knowledge.

Luke 12:47 "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.

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For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Listen to the decrees of righteous judgment.

Isaiah 10:1 "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed:

2. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still."

Jer. 5:26 "For among my people are found wicked men; they lay wait as he that setteth snares; they set a trap; they catch men.

27. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit; therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

28. They are waxen fat, they shine; yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked; they judge not the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

29. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER—FORETOLD

Jer. 13:15 "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken.

16. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

17. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive."

Listen to the warning applicable to this day, which the prophets of old pronounce upon the heedless:

Isaiah 5:22 "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.

23. Which justify the wicked for reward, and taketh away the righteousness of the righteous from him.

24. Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and the blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

Isaiah 5:11 "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night till wine inflame them.

12. And the harp and the lute, and tabret and the pipe and wine are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands.

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13. Therefore my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge; and their honorable men are famished and their multitude dried up with thirst.

14. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory and their multitude and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it.

15. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.

16. But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness."

The above prophecies indicate that in the Day of Judgment, people will reap what they have sown. A verbal confession of faith is inadequate, but it will be necessary, with purest motive and deeds of stainless holiness, to cooperate with God in His program for the Kingdom. The only alternative is self-destruction. Many will say "Lord, Lord," but will be rejected in the Kingdom of the Father, for if they do not love God enough to cooperate with Him, how can they realize His love?

Matt. 7:21 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Bahá'u'lláh fulfills the above meaning more completely, as follows:

“O Son of My Handmaid!

Guidance hath ever been by words, and now it is given by deeds. Everyone must show forth deeds that are pure and holy, for words are the property of all alike, whereas such deeds as these belong only to Our loved ones. Strive then with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds. In this wise We counsel you in this holy and resplendent tablet.” (*Persian Hidden Words*, no. 76)

The 4th chapter of Micah begins “But in the last days, it shall come to pass.” The time of the end is therefore clearly understood. He continues :

Micah 4:3 “And he shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

4. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

6. In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

7. And I will make her that halteth a remnant and her that was cast off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever.”

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From the above, it will be seen how righteous will be the judgment, for the Lord does not only judge and warn the heedless, but rewards the righteous.

“O ye Peoples of the World!

Know verily that an unforeseen calamity is following you and that grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that the deeds ye have committed have been blotted from My sight. By My beauty! All your doings hath My pen graven with open characters upon tablets of chrysolite.” (*Persian Hidden Words*, no. 63)

CHAPTER 27

HOW HE WILL JUDGE

Matt. 25:31 "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of His glory.

32. And before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats;

33. And He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35. For I was an hungered and ye gave me to eat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in;

36. Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink?

38. And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee?

39. And when saw we thee sick, or in prison and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

41. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed unto the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

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42. For I was an hungered and ye did not give me to eat. I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink.

43. I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison and ye visited me not.

44. Then shall they also answer saying Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them saying, Verily, I say unto you. Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.

46. And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life."

Matt. 13:30 "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

40. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world.

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, He that hath ears, let him hear.

49. So it shall be in the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the righteous."

In accordance with the foregoing prophecies of Christ of eternal punishment for the wicked and glorification for the righteous, Bahá'u'lláh warns that such a time is very close at hand.

Beginning one of His mighty Tablets with the words "O Kings of the Earth," Bahá'u'lláh, addressing them states :

"Those men who, having amassed the vanities and ornaments of the earth, have turned away disdainfully from God—these have lost both this world and the world to come. Ere long, will God, with the Hand of Power, strip them from their possessions, and divest them of the robe of His bounty. . . .

"We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye

fail, at the appointed time, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. . . . The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appeareth to be lamentably defective . . . O kings of Christendom! . . . We have pledged Ourselves to secure Thy triumph upon earth and to exalt our Cause above all men, though no king be found who would turn his face toward Thee.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 209, 214, 216, 248)

The above admonition of Bahá'u'lláh rings true to that voiced by Christ who speaks of the “fixed time” as the “shut door” and “grievous afflictions” as “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Luke 13:24 “Strive to enter in by the narrow door; for many I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25. When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say to you, I know you not, whence ye are;

26. Then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets.

27. And he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28. There shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac and

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Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without.

29. And they shall come from the east and west and from the north and south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God, and Behold there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last."

Bahá'u'lláh continues more explicitly for the guidance and edification of mankind:

"The Great Being saith: The structure of world stability and order hath been reared upon, and will continue to be sustained by, the twin pillars of reward and punishment . . . In another passage He hath written: Take heed, O concourse of the rulers of the world! There is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power the force of justice and wisdom . . . Blessed is the king who marcheth with the ensign of wisdom unfurled before him, and the battalions of justice massed in his rear. He verily is the ornament that adorneth the brow of peace and the countenance of security. There can be no doubt whatever that if the day star of justice, which the clouds of tyranny have obscured, were to shed its light upon men, the face of the earth would be completely transformed." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 219)

The following prophecy speaks for itself:

Rev. 11:18 "And the nations were angry and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets and other saints, and them that fear Thy Name, small and great, and should'st destroy them which destroy the earth."

CHAPTER 28

PURPOSE OF TRIBULATION

Isaiah 57:16 "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth; and I smote him. I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

18. I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also and restore comfort unto him, and to his mourners.

20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21. There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked."

Isaiah shows the purpose of tribulation thus:

Isaiah 24:1 "Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste and turneth it upside down and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

4. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

5. The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant.

6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate. Therefore

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the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

8. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth."

Also Jeremiah 6:15 states in definitely certain terms that evil shall befall nations because they do not hearken unto the words of the Holy One.

Malachi likens human tribulation to the refining of silver :

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord, whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2. And who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like a fuller's soap.

3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

A silversmith must sit while refining silver, with his eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, for if refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be injured. The silversmith must sit, watching closely until he sees his own image reflected in the silver, then it is taken from the fire.

Zech. 13:9 "And I will bring a third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God."

God sees it needful to put His children into the furnace; but He is seated by the side of it. His eye is steadily intent upon the work of refining until purifying is completed. Trials are the purifying power of God's wisdom and love. When He sees His own image in His people, His work of purifying has been accomplished.

Isaiah 1:24 "Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries and avenge me of mine enemies.

25. And I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin."

Dan. 12:10 "Many shall be purified and made white and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Psalms 79:9 "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us and purge away our sins for thy name's sake.

13. So we thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever; we will show forth thy praise to all generations."

Those who have accepted and are trying to follow the teachings of the Name of Glory, Bahá'u'lláh,

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depend upon His revealed prayers to show forth the praise of the Creator, the Ancient of Days. These prayers are filled with the purifying fire of the love of God, and purge God's elect from the dross of doubt and uncertainty.

"O God of Names, Creator of heaven! I beg of Thee by Thine invisible day-spring, the exalted El-Bahá, the Most Glorious!

O God, make my prayer a fire to consume the veils that withhold me from witnessing Thy Beauty and make it a light to direct me unto the sea of Thy Union.

Thou art the revealer, the forgiving, the merciful!" (*Bahá'í Prayers*, page 21)

CHAPTER 29

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Rev. 12:1 "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;

2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

Isaiah 66:7 "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child."

The man child in this prophecy is the same as the man child mentioned in Revelation.

Rev. 12:5 "And she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

These prophecies of Isaiah 66 and Revelation 12 are in exact accord. They did not refer to past events, but to the future. Revelation was written by John after the time of Christ, so these prophecies of Isaiah and Revelation necessarily refer to a time in the future, when the world would stand in need,

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because of its destroyers, of greater remedies and fuller instruction than ever before.

Isaiah 66:8 "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

9. 'Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord.'

The birth or bringing forth of God's kingdom under the Bahá'í administration has already started, and was established previous to the actual travail and woe of the world, which is now beginning and will grow more intense until the judgment day has passed, when there will be nothing left on earth but God's kingdom.

That the travail will become worse until the kingdom of God is fully established, is shown by other prophecies which are self-explanatory.

Matt. 24:7 "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places.

8. And these are the beginning of woe."

Zeph. 1:17 "And I will bring distress upon men that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord, and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

18. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath;

but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy, for He shall make even a speedy rid-dance of all them that dwell in the land."

Although Bahá'u'lláh is destined to bring the Most Great Peace to earth, and will establish the kingdom of God, a purging of all evil must first come. This, the prophets foresaw and questioned:

Jer. 30:5 "For thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

6. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned unto paleness?

7. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

9. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them."

The time of this great day, and this distress is more specifically mentioned in another similar pas-sage:

Jer. 4:9 "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that the heart of the King shall per-ish, for the heart of the princes and the priests shall be astonished; and the prophets shall wonder.

10. Then said I, Oh, Lord God! Surely Thou hath greatly deceived this people, and Jerusalem, say ye, shall have peace! whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

13. Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his

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chariots shall be as a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.

18. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

19. My bowels, my bowels, I am pained to my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me. I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet and alarm of war.

20. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled."

This destruction is now upon us, as the news comes daily from different parts of the world.

Jer. 4:22 "For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

27. For thus hath the Lord said, the whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

29. The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen. They shall go into thickets and climb up upon the rocks. Every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein."

How many cities are becoming desolate since man is wise to invent bombs and airplanes, but slow to hear the word of the Lord? This prophecy could not have been applied to any previous time. It is unsafe for women, children or the sick to remain in a city—all must flee for their lives from the bombs, thus fulfilling prophecy.

GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER—FORETOLD

Jer. 4:31 "For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child—the voice of the daughter of Zion that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying: Woe is me now! For my soul is wearied because of murderers."

Also see Isaiah 26:15 to 21. Christ also prophesied regarding the travail of all mankind in which women and children are not spared. (See Matt. 24:4-25. Luke 21:10-25. Mark 13:10-23)

Although men will suffer and travail, as foretold in Bible prophecies, there is no deliverance until all turn their faces to God and cooperate with His specific guidance for the New Era, which has already been ushered in.

"Say: We have caused the rivers of Divine utterance to proceed out of Our throne, that the tender herbs of wisdom and understanding may spring forth from the soil of your hearts. Will ye not be thankful? They who disdain to worship their Lord shall be of those who are cast off. And oft as Our verses are rehearsed unto them, they persist in proud disdain, and in their gross violation of His law, and know it not. As for them who have disbelieved in Him, they shall be in the shadow of a black smoke. 'The Hour' hath come upon them, while they are disporting themselves. They have been seized by their forelock, and yet know it not.

"The thing that must come hath come suddenly; behold how they flee from it! The inevitable hath come to pass; witness how they have cast it behind their backs! This is the Day whereon every man will

fly from himself, how much more from his kindred, could ye but perceive it. Say: By God! The blast hath been blown on the trumpet, and lo, mankind hath swooned away before us! The Herald hath cried out, and the Summoner raised His voice saying: 'The Kingdom is God's, the Most Powerful, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.'

"This is the Day on which all eyes shall stare up with terror, the Day in which the hearts of them that dwell on earth shall tremble, save them whom thy Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, pleaseth to deliver. All faces have turned black except those to whom the God of Mercy hath vouchsafed a radiant heart. Drunken are the eyes of those men that have openly refused to behold the face of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 43, 44)

This great day of tribulation was similarly described by Zephaniah, the prophet:

Zeph. 1:15 "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm."

None is excepted:

Zeph. 3:8 "My determination is to gather the nations, to assemble the kingdoms, that I may pour upon them Mine indignation, even all the fierceness of Mine anger; for with the fire of My jealousy shall all the earth be devoured."

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, has recently written:

"The whole of mankind is groaning, is dying to be led to unity, and to terminate its age-long martyrdom. And yet it stubbornly refuses to embrace the light and acknowledge the sovereign authority of the one Power that can extricate it from its entanglements, and avert the woeful calamity that threatens to engulf it.

"Ominous indeed is the voice of Bahá'u'lláh that rings through these prophetic words: 'O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight.' And again: 'We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!'

"Must humanity, tormented as she now is, be afflicted with still severer tribulations ere their purifying influence can prepare her to enter the heavenly Kingdom destined to be established upon earth? Must the inauguration of so vast, so unique, so illumined an era in human history be ushered in by so great a catastrophe in human affairs as to recall, nay surpass, the appalling collapse of Roman civilization in the first centuries of the Christian Era? Must a series of profound convulsions stir and rock the human race ere Bahá'u'lláh can be enthroned in the hearts and consciences of the masses, ere His undisputed ascendancy is universally recognized, and

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the noble edifice of His World Order is reared and established?" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 201, 202)

As foretold in prophecy, however, the Lord will terminate this travail for the sake of the elect by a miracle, described by Bahá'u'lláh in the following passage:

"The world is in travail and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then and only then will the Divine Standard be unfurled and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 33)

The prophecy for the above follows:

Matt. 24:21 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22. And except those days should be shortened, there should be no flesh saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Who would not desire to repeat with the elect the following prayer for protection and steadfastness during the time of the world's greatest tribulations:

"The tenderness of Thy mercy, O my Lord, surpasseth the fury of Thy wrath, and Thy loving-

kindness exceedeth Thy hot displeasure, and Thy grace excelleth Thy justice. Hold Thou, through Thy wondrous favors and mercies, the hands of Thy creatures, and suffer them not to be separated from the grace which Thou hast ordained as the means whereby they can recognize Thee. The glory of Thy might beareth me witness! Were such a thing to happen, every soul would be sore shaken, every man endued with understanding would be bewildered, and every possessor of knowledge would be dumb-founded, except those who have been succored through the hands of Thy Cause, and have been made the recipients of the revelation of Thy grace and of the tokens of Thy favors." (*Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 136)

CHAPTER 30

TWELVE BASIC BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS

Rev. 22:1 "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb."

Bahá'u'lláh has poured out the "water of life" with unmistakable meaning, clear as crystal, upon the earth. The twelve basic divine laws on which the Kingdom of the Father is being established on earth, were given by Bahá'u'lláh over sixty years ago for the healing of the nations, and are to be found in His published writings of that time. Briefly, these compiled from the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, are as follows:

1. "THE ONENESS OF THE WORLD OF HUMANITY. Bahá'u'lláh addresses Himself to the world of man saying, 'Ye are the leaves of one tree and the fruits of one orchard.' That is, the world of existence is no other than one tree, and the nations or peoples are like unto the different branches, or limbs thereof, and human individuals are similar to the fruits and blossoms thereof . . . while in all past religious books and epistles, the world of humanity has been divided into two parts: one called

the 'people of the Book' or the 'pure tree' and the other the 'evil tree'. One-half of the people . . . were consigned to the mercy of the Creator, and the other half were considered as objects of the wrath of their Maker. But Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity. He submerged all mankind in the sea of divine generosity.

2. "INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH. No man should follow blindly his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and investigate truth in order that he may find the Truth; whereas the religion of forefathers and ancestors is based upon blind imitation—man should investigate the truth.

3. "THE FOUNDATION OF ALL RELIGIONS IS ONE. The foundation underlying all the divine precepts is one reality. It must needs be reality, and reality is one, not multiple. Therefore the foundation of the divine religions is one. But we can see that certain forms have come in, certain imitations of forms and ceremonials have crept in. They are heretical, they are accidental, because they differ: hence they cause differences amongst religions. But if we set aside these imitations and seek the reality of the foundation we shall all agree, because religion is one and not multiple.

4. "RELIGION MUST BE THE CAUSE OF UNITY AMONG MANKIND. Every religion is the greatest divine effulgence, the cause of life amongst men, the cause of the honor of humanity, and is productive of life everlasting amongst mankind. Religion is not for enmity or hatred. It is not for tyranny or injustice. If religion be the cause of

enmity and rancor, if it should prove the cause of alienating men, assuredly non-religion would be better. For religion and the teachings which appertain to it are as a course of treatment. What is the object of any course of treatment? It is cure and healing. But if the outcome of a course of treatment should be productive of mere diagnosis and discussion of symptoms, the abolition of it is evidently preferable. In this sense, abandoning religions would be a step toward unity.

5. "RELIGION MUST BE IN ACCORD WITH SCIENCE AND REASON. Religion must be reasonable; it must agree perfectly with science, so that science shall sanction religion and religion sanction science. The two must be brought together, indissolubly, in reality. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept a thing because it was called religion, even though it were not in accord with human reason.

6. "EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. This is peculiar to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, for all former religious systems placed men above women. Daughters and sons must follow the same form of study and the same education. Having one course of education promotes unity among mankind.

7. "ABANDONMENT OF ALL PREJUDICES. It is established that all the prophets of God have come to unite the children of men and not to disperse them, and to put in action the law of love and not enmity. Consequently we must throw aside all these prejudices,—the racial prejudice, the patriotic prejudice, the religious and political prejudices. We must become the cause of unity of the human race.

8. "UNIVERSAL PEACE. All men and nations shall make peace. There shall be universal peace amongst governments, universal peace amongst religions, universal peace amongst races, universal peace amongst the denizens of all religions. Today in the world of humanity the most important matter is the question of universal peace. The realization of this principle is the crying need of the time.

9. "UNIVERSAL EDUCATION. All mankind should partake of both knowledge and education, and this partaking of knowledge and of education is one of the necessities of religion. The education of each child is obligatory. If there are no parents, the community must look after the child.

10. "SOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM. No religious books of the past prophets speak of the economic question, while this problem has been thoroughly solved in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh . . . Certain regulations are revealed which insure the welfare and well being of all humanity. Just as the rich man enjoys his rest and his pleasures surrounded by luxuries, the poor man must likewise have a home, be provided with sustenance, and not be in want . . . Until this is effected happiness is impossible. All are equal in the estimation of God; their rights are one and there is no distinction for any soul; all are protected beneath the justice of God.

11. "A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE. An international auxiliary language shall be adopted which shall be taught by all the schools and academies of the world. A committee appointed by national bodies shall select a suitable language to be used as a means of international communication, and that

language shall be taught in all the schools of the world in order that everyone shall need but two languages, his national tongue and the international auxiliary language. All will acquire the international auxiliary language.

12. "AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL. A universal tribunal under the power of God, under the protection of all men, shall be established. Each one must obey the decisions of this tribunal, in order to arrange the difficulties of every nation.

About sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh commanded the people to establish universal peace and summoned all the nations to the 'divine banquet of international arbitration' so that the questions of boundaries, of national honor and property and of vital interests between nations might be decided by an arbitral court of justice.

Remember, these precepts were given more than half a century ago. At that moment no one spoke of universal peace, nor of any of these principles; but Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed them to all the sovereigns of the world . . . They are the spirit of this age, the light of this age."

Rev. 22:14 "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may come in through the gates into the city.

15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

17. And the spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst, Come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

CHAPTER 31

ONENESS OF THE WORLD OF HUMANITY

Malachi 2:10 "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers!"

God's covenant, unlike man's, includes black, white, brown and yellow races, Jews, Gentiles, Muhammdans, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, all to the ends of the earth. This fulfills the prophecy that "Every knee shall bend and every tongue confess."

Zeph. 3:10 "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."

Malachi 1:11 "From the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles."

Psalms 68:29 "Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee."

31. Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."

Even while Bahá'u'lláh was a prisoner at 'Akká, Palestine, people came from Egypt, England, India,

Ethiopia, Persia, Russia and all parts of the world to visit Him, and His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The following excerpts are a restatement by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on His Father's words on the oneness of mankind:

"He addressed all mankind, saying 'Ye are all the fruits of one tree. There are no two trees,—one a tree of divine mercy, the other the tree of satan.' Again He said 'Ye are all the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch'. This was his announcement; this was his promise of the oneness of the world of humanity. Anathema and execration were utterly abrogated. He said 'It is not becoming in man to curse another; it is not befitting that man should attribute darkness to another; it is not meet that one human being should consider another human being as bad; nay, rather, all mankind are the servants of one God; God is the father of all; there is not a single exception to that law. There are no people of satan; all belong to the Merciful. There is no darkness; all is light. All are the servants of God, and man must love humanity from his heart. He must verily behold humanity as submerged in the divine mercy.'" (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 260)

"Racial prejudice or separation into nations such as French, German, American and so on is unnatural and proceeds from human motive and ignorance. All are the children and servants of God. Why should we be separated by artificial and imaginary boundaries?" (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 281)

Isaiah 65:1 "I am sought of them that asked not for me: I am found of them that sought me not.

I said Behold me, behold me unto a nation that was not called by my name."

Although this passage has been interpreted by some as referring to the rejection of Christ by the Jews and acceptance of that Holy One by the Gentiles, yet as this chapter ends with the words, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord," this can refer to none other time than when the millennium is established. This proof is further strengthened by the fact that among the teachings of His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh, this principle is expounded in no unmistakable way.

"All humanity are the children of God; they belong to the same family, to the same original race. There can be no multiplicity of races, since all are the descendants of Adam. This signifies that racial assumption and distinction is nothing but superstition. In the estimate of God there are no English, French, Germans, Turkish or Persians. All these in the presence of God are equal; they are of one race and creation; God did not make these divisions. These distinctions have had their origin in man himself. Therefore as they are against the plan and purpose of the reality they are false and imaginary. We are of one physical race even as we are of one physical plan of material body; each endowed with two eyes, two ears, one head, two feet. Among the animals racial prejudice does not exist. Consider the doves; there is no distinction as to whether it is an oriental or an occidental dove. The sheep are all of one race; there is no assumption of distinction be-

tween an eastern and western sheep. When they meet they associate with perfect fellowship. If a dove from the west should go to the Orient it will associate with the eastern doves unhesitatingly. There will be no attitude of unwillingness as if saying 'you belong to the East, I am from the West.' Is it reasonable or allowable that a racial prejudice which is not observed by the animal kingdom should be entertained by man?" (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 293)

God's love in this Day encompasses all. He is no respecter of persons. The prophets of the past also declare this.

Hosea 2:23 "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

The foregoing Old Testament prophecy is again reiterated in the New Testament:

Romans 9:25 "For He saith in Hosea, I will call them my people which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved.

26. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there they shall be called the children of the living God."

To show just how the Bahá'í teachings fulfill the above prophecies, we quote again from the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

“One of the important questions which affect the unity and solidarity of humankind is the fellowship and equality of the white and colored races. Between these two races certain points of agreement and points of distinction exist which warrant just and mutual consideration. The points of contact are many; for in the material or physical plane of being, both are constituted alike and exist under the same law of growth and bodily development. Furthermore both live and move in the plane of the senses and are endowed with human intelligence. There are many other mutual qualifications. In this country, the United States of America, patriotism is common to both races; all have equal rights to citizenship, speak one language, receive the blessings of the same civilization and follow the precepts of the same religion. In fact numerous points of partnership and agreement exist between the two races; whereas the one point of distinction is that of color. Shall this, the least of all distinctions be allowed to separate you as races and individuals? In physical bodies, in the law of growth, sense endowment, intelligence, patriotism, language, citizenship, civilization and religion you are one and the same. A single point of distinction exists; that of racial color. God is not pleased with, neither should any reasonable or intelligent man be willing to recognize inequality in the races because of this distinction.

“But there is need of a superior power to overcome human prejudices; a power which nothing in the world of mankind can withstand and which will overshadow the effect of all other forces at work in human conditions. That irresistible power is the love of God. It is my hope and prayer that it may de-

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stroy the prejudice of this one point of distinction between you and unite you all permanently under its hallowed protection. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity. He has caused various nations and divergent creeds to unite. He has declared that difference of race and color is like the variegated beauty of flowers in a garden. If you enter a garden, you will see yellow, white, blue, red flowers in profusion and beauty; each radiant within itself and although different from the others, lending its own charm to them. Racial difference in the human kingdom is similar. If all the flowers in a garden were the same color, the effect would be monotonous and wearying to the eye.

"Therefore Bahá'u'lláh has said that the various races of human kind lend a composite harmony and beauty of color to the whole. Let all associate then in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement among them." (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pages 65, 66)

"When the racial elements of the American nation unite in actual fellowship and accord, the lights of the oneness of humanity will shine, the day of eternal glory and bliss will dawn, the spirit of God encompass and the divine favors descend. Under the leadership and training of God the real shepherd, all will be protected and preserved. He will lead them in green pastures of happiness and sustenance and they will attain to the real goal of existence. This is the blessing and benefit of unity; this is the outcome of love. This is the sign of the 'Most Great Peace,' this is the star of the oneness of the human

world. Consider how blessed this condition will be. I pray for you and ask the confirmation and assistance of God in your behalf." (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 54)

"One of the great events which is to occur in the day of the manifestation of that incomparable Branch, is the hoisting of the standard of God among all nations; meaning that all the nations and tribes will come under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. The antagonism of faiths and religions, the hostility of races and peoples, and the national differences, will be eradicated from amongst them. All will become one religion, one faith, one race, and one single people, and will dwell in one native land, which is the terrestrial globe. Universal peace and concord will be realized between all the nations, and that incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel: signifying that in this cycle Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land, and that the Jewish people who are scattered to the East and West, South and North, will be assembled together." (*Some Answered Questions*, pages 75, 76)

"Now see: these events did not take place in the Christian cycle, for the nations did not come under the One Standard which is the Divine Branch. But in this cycle of the Lord of Hosts, all the nations and peoples will enter under the shadow of this Flag. In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land, in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the books of the Prophets, has begun to be

manifest.” (*Some Answered Questions*, page 76)

Nationalism is not in accord with the universal teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, whose trumpet-call to the world has sounded forth the command “Let not man glory in this, that he loves his country, but let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.” A narrow nationalism cannot continue to survive. All mankind will, before long, conform to the teachings provided for the healing of the nations as laid down by God's Prophet. Through great tribulation man will learn to look to his Creator for guidance rather than to finite ambitious leaders. God created the universe and all that is therein. Why should anyone imagine Him incapable of providing for the Federation of the World, according to His design from the beginning? It is man's own heedlessness in disregarding the Manifestations of God that brings war and destruction. God never leaves the world uninformed, or unwarned.

A program has been provided by God through Bahá'u'lláh, whereby the Federation of the World can be established with the greatest display of love of each nation for the other, without anyone in any land being persecuted or cheated by the unscrupulous. For the ignorant or unscrupulous to work against this program, which shall prevail in the end, is to invite disaster. It would cause suffering in which all would share, thereby proving the truth of the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that there is a oneness in mankind. Therefore, it is urged upon all to teach

these principles to others, so that all may become informed and cooperate.

The urgency of this unity can be fully realized by consideration of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh on this subject. Some quotations follow:

“It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness. It behooveth them to cleave to whatsoever will, in this Day, be conducive to the exaltation of their station, and to the promotion of their best interests.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 6)

“The summons and the message which We gave were never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only. Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty. The whole earth is illuminated with the resplendent glory of God's Revelation.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 96)

“‘A new life,’ Bahá'u'lláh proclaims, ‘is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause, or perceived its motive.’ ‘O ye children of men,’ He thus addresses His generation, ‘the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race. . . . This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure.’ ‘The

well-being of mankind,' He declares, 'its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.' 'So powerful is the light of unity,' is His further testimony, 'that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words . . . This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations.' 'He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful.' He, moreover, has written, 'cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created days.'" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 202, 203)

'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the corner-stone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendor. The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of languages, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse.

Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 39)

"O friends! Consort with all the people of the world with joy and fragrance. Fellowship is the cause of unity, and unity is the source of order in the world. Blessed are they who are kind and serve with love." Bahá'u'lláh.

"'The Tabernacle of Unity', Bahá'u'lláh proclaims in His message to all mankind, 'has been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers . . . Of one tree are all ye the fruit and of one bough the leaves . . . The world is but one country and mankind its citizens . . . Let not a man glory in that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.'" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 41)

Finally, the Beloved Guardian of the Cause of God, Shoghi Effendi, writes on the Oneness of Mankind, the following:

"One word more . . . The proclamation of the Oneness of Mankind—the head corner-stone of Bahá'u'lláh's all-embracing dominion—can under no circumstances be compared with such expressions of pious hope as have been uttered in the past. His is not merely a call . . . [but] a promise that its realization is at hand.

"Uttered at a time when its possibility had not yet been seriously envisaged in any part of the world, it has, by virtue of that celestial potency which the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh has breathed into it, come at

last to be regarded, by an increasing number of thoughtful men, not only as an approaching possibility, but as the necessary outcome of the forces now operating in the world." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 47)

CHAPTER 32

THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF THE FATHER

Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold; the great God hath made known to the King what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure."

From the above, it will be noticed that the Kingdom shall not be left to other people. In past dispensations, the Kingdom of God on earth had not been scheduled to appear, but Daniel is certain that the time will come when the "God of heaven" shall not leave the setting up of His kingdom to other people, as the Father Himself will establish His kingdom on earth, even as in heaven. Bahá'ís speak of the kingdom of God as the "Abhá Realm," for in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh it is stated, "I am He that liveth in the Abhá Realm of Glory."

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Psalms 145:10 "And all Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy saints shall bless Thee.

11. They shall speak of the Glory of Thy Kingdom; and talk of Thy power.

12. To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom.

13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Therefore thank ye God that ye have come into the plane of existence in this radiant century wherein the bestowals of God are appearing from all directions, when the doors of the kingdom have been opened unto you, the call of God is being raised and the virtues of the human world are in the process of unfoldment. The day has come when all darkness is to be dispelled and the Sun of Truth shall shine forth radiantly. This time of the world may be likened to the equinoctial in the annual cycle. For verily this is the spring season of God. In the holy books a promise is given that the spring-time of God shall make itself manifest. Jerusalem the holy city shall descend from heaven, Zion shall leap forth and dance and the Holy Land be submerged in the ocean of divine effulgence." (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 35)

1 Cor. 15:24 "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25. "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá shows the difference between material and divine brotherhood. In order for the Kingdom of God to be established on earth He says that these two realms must be united:

“Material brotherhood does not prevent nor remove warfare; it does not dispel differences among mankind. But spiritual alliance destroys the very foundation of war, effaces differences entirely, promulgates the oneness of humanity, revivifies mankind, causes hearts to turn to the kingdom of God and baptizes souls with the Holy Spirit. Through this divine brotherhood, the material world will become resplendent with the lights of divinity, the mirror of materiality will acquire its lights from heaven and justice will be established in the world so that no trace of darkness, hatred and enmity shall be visible. Humanity shall come within the bounds of security, the prophethood of all the messengers of God shall be established, Zion shall leap and dance, Jerusalem shall rejoice, the Mosaic flame shall ignite, the Messianic light shall shine, the world will become another world and humanity shall put on another power. This is the greatest divine bestowal; this is the effulgence of the kingdom of God; this is the day of illumination; this is the merciful century.” (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 126)

The Psalms are full of definite promises that the Kingdom shall be the Lord’s, the dawn of which the earth is now entering.

Psalms 22:27 “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.

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28. For the Kingdom is the Lord's and He is the governor among the nations."

It is plain to see that the goal of all prophecy and the goal of all religion are to attain to the establishment of the "Kingdom of the Father" upon earth. As soon as humanity investigates God's complete and perfect program, given for this age of man's maturity, and complies with the remedies prescribed, then the reality of the Kingdom will become manifest. The Kingdom of Heaven can be established on earth by no other means than the creative power of God, the Father.

St. Luke 12:29 "And seek not ye what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The Kingdom of Heaven is really something to be thankful for and we turn with energy to drink in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the glorious Kingdom of the Father which 's available to the earth:

"This is the century of the effulgence of the rays of the Sun of Truth. Therefore you must render

thanks and glorification to God that you were born in this age. Furthermore, you have listened to the call of Bahá'u'lláh. Your nostrils are perfumed with the breezes of the paradise of Abhá. You have caught glimpses of the light from the horizon of the Orient. You were asleep; you are awakened. Your ears are attentive; your hearts are informed. You have acquired the love of God. You have attained to the knowledge of God. This is the most great bestowal of God. This is the breath of the Holy Spirit and this consists of faith and assurance. This life eternal is the second birth; this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God has destined this station for you all. He has prepared this for you. You must appreciate the value of this bounty and engage your time in mentioning and thanking the true One. You must live in the utmost happiness. If any trouble or vicissitude comes into your lives, if your heart is depressed on account of health, livelihood or vocation, let not these things affect you. They should not cause unhappiness, for Bahá'u'lláh has brought you divine happiness. He has prepared heavenly food for you; he has destined eternal bounty for you; he has bestowed everlasting glory upon you. Therefore these glad-tidings should cause you to soar in the atmosphere of joy forever and ever. Render continual thanks unto God so that the confirmations of God may encircle you all." (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 183)

"Be happy and joyous because the bestowals of God are intended for you and the life of the Holy Spirit is breathing upon you.

Rejoice, for the heavenly table is prepared for you.

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Rejoice, for the angels of heaven are your assistants and helpers.

Rejoice, for the glance of the Blessed Beauty Bahá'u'lláh is directed upon you.

Rejoice, for Bahá'u'lláh is your protector.

Rejoice, for the glory everlasting is destined for you.

Rejoice, for life eternal is awaiting you.

“How many blessed souls have longed for this radiant century their utmost hopes and desires centered upon the happiness and joy of one such day as this. Many the nights they passed sleepless and lamenting until the very morn in longing anticipation of this age, yearning to realize even an hour of this time. God has favored you in this century and has specialized you for the realization of its blessings. Therefore you must praise and thank God with heart and soul in appreciation of this great opportunity and the attainment of this infinite bestowal; that such doors have been opened before your faces, such abundance is pouring down from the cloud of mercy and that these refreshing breezes from the paradise of Abhá are resuscitating you.” (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 209)

CHAPTER 33

REALITY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER

John 18:36 "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

The above brief explanation of the reality of the Kingdom of God is clearly and fully explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, herewith:

"The Kingdom [of God] is not a material place, it is sanctified from time and place. It is a spiritual world, a divine world, and the centre of the Sovereignty of God; it is freed from body and that which is corporeal, and it is purified and sanctified from the imaginations of the human world. To be limited to place is a property of bodies and not of spirits. Place and time surround the body, not the mind and spirit. Observe that the body of man is confined to a small place: it covers only two spans of earth; but the spirit and mind of man travel to all countries and regions—even through the limitless space of the heavens—surround all that exists, and make discoveries in the exalted spheres and infinite distances. This is because the spirit has no place, it

is placeless; and for the spirit, the earth and the heaven are as one, since it makes discoveries in both. But the body is limited to a place, and does not know that which is beyond it.

“For life is of two kinds: that of the body, and that of the spirit . . . Although the material life has existence, it is pure non-existence and absolute death for the holy saints. So man exists and this stone also exists, but what a difference between the existence of man and of the stone! Though the stone exists, in relation to the existence of man it is non-existent.

“The meaning of eternal life is the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the flower receives the gift of the season, the air, and the breezes of spring. Consider: this flower had life in the beginning like the life of the mineral; but by the coming of the season of spring, of the bounty of the clouds of the spring-time, and of the heat of the glowing sun, it attained to another life of the utmost freshness, delicacy, and fragrance. The first life of the flower, in comparison to the second life, is death.

“The meaning is that the life of the Kingdom is the life of the spirit, the eternal life, and that it is purified from place, like the spirit of man which has no place. For if you examine the human body, you will not find a special spot or locality for the spirit, for it has never had a place; it is immaterial. It has connection with the body, like that of the sun with the mirror. The sun is not within the mirror, but it has a connection with the mirror.

“In the same way, the world of the Kingdom is sanctified from everything that can be perceived by the eye or by the other senses—hearing, smell, taste or touch. The mind of man—where is it in him?

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If you examine the body with the eye, the ear, or the other senses, you will not find it; nevertheless it exists. Therefore the mind has no place, but it is connected with the brain. The Kingdom is also like this. In the same way love has no place, but it is connected with the heart; so the Kingdom has no place, but is connected with man." (*Some answered Questions*, pages 280, 281, 282)

No wonder that Christ said that when He the Spirit of Truth would come, He would lead us into all truth, for the above explanation as to the place of the Kingdom fully explains the true meaning which was expressed by Christ as to where to find the Kingdom of God.

Luke 17:20 "And when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation;

21. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."

'Abdu'l-Bahá continues:

"Entrance into the Kingdom is through the love of God, through detachment, through holiness and chastity, through truthfulness, purity, steadfastness, faithfulness, and the sacrifice of life.

"These explanations show that man is immortal and lives eternally. For those who believe in God, who have love of God, and faith, life is excellent—that is, it is eternal; but to those souls who are veiled from God, although they have life, it is dark, and in

comparison with the life of believers, it is non-existence. For example, the stone and man both exist; but although the mineral exists, in relation to man, it is non-existent." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 282)

Matt: 6:19 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal;

20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Although Peter was not an educated man, he had stored up for himself the heavenly treasure of spiritual discernment which enabled him to recognize divinity in the manifestation of Christ. Other men could see the Christ only as a man like themselves, not the inner reality. 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the following words completely explains the meaning of the gospel where it is said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

"This utterance of Christ is a confirmation of the statement of Peter, when Christ asked: Whom do you believe me to be? and Peter answered: I believe that 'Thou art the Son of the living God.' Then Christ said to him: 'Thou art Peter'—for Cephas in Aramaic means rock—'and upon this rock I will build my church.' For the others in answer to Christ said that he was Elias, and some said John the Baptist, and some others Jeremias or one of the Prophets.

"Christ wished by suggestion, or an allusion, to

confirm the words of Peter; so on account of the suitability of his name, Peter, he said: 'and upon this rock I will build my church,' meaning, thy belief that Christ is the son of the living God, will be the foundation of the Religion of God; and upon this belief the foundation of the church of God—which is the Law of God—shall be established." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 154)

It was Peter's ability to see the spiritual reality of Christ which entitled him to be entrusted with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. The heedless, and the unjust, having eyes see not, and ears hear not the divine attributes and voice of the Holy Ones. Blessed are those in this day, who like Peter, are able, through spiritual understanding, to comprehend the reality of the Kingdom of God, and the prophecies concerning it; but it is prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments that there will be some whose hearts are gross and whose eyes are closed.

Matt. 13:14 "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive:

15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, for their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them.

16. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear."

Today, one has only to wish to know God, and to discover the greatness of His might, when all the doors of divine wisdom will be opened. Bahá'u'lláh Himself tells how this may be done, so that those who wish may experience the magnetic power of the Kingdom of God with all its blessings:

“If it be your wish, O people, to know God and to discover the greatness of His might, look, then, upon Me with Mine own eyes, and not with the eyes of any one besides Me. Ye will, otherwise, be never capable of recognizing Me, though ye ponder My Cause as long as My Kingdom endureth, and meditate upon all created things throughout the eternity of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Omnipotent, the Ever-Abiding, the All-Wise. Thus have we manifested the truth of Our Revelation, that haply the people may be roused from their heedlessness, and be of them that understand.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 272, 273)

CHAPTER 34

HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Rom. 8:16-17 "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together."

Luke 6:20 "And He lifted up His eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21. Blessed are ye that hunger now for ye shall be filled; Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh.

22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23. "Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy; for, behold your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

Heirs of the Kingdom are those that overcome, meaning who correct their own shortcomings and thus help to bring order, justice and righteousness into the world.

Rev. 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Naturally, the heirs of the Kingdom are to be the elect of earth, as foretold:

Matt. 24:31 "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The sound of the trumpet is, of course, the sending forth of the call, or the announcement that the Kingdom is now waiting for all those who choose to enter.

No one who disobeys the ordinances and commandments sent down by God is eligible to the Kingdom.

Matt. 13:37 "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man [Bahá'u'lláh].

38. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one.

39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41. The son of man [Bahá'u'lláh] shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity.

42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear."

Particular attention is called to the 41st verse of Matthew 13, which states that "the son of man," as Bahá'u'lláh is always designated to differentiate Him from the Christ, "The Son of God," shall send forth His angels who shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity. Even after having entered into affiliation with the Bahá'ís under the administration of the Kingdom of the Father, there shall be purgings of those who do iniquity.

Eph. 5:5 "For this we know, that no whoremonger, no unclean person, no covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God."

God's angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and will cast them into the "furnace of fire," the fire of spiritual purification, foretold by Christ, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Matt. 13:47 "Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.

50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Who are these angels, destined to separate the wicked from the just? The answer can be found in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, which verify the prophecies of Jesus, the "Son of God." As foretold, The Father testifies and bears witness for the Son.

"The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting.' 'He will, ere long, out of the Bosom of Power draw forth the Hands of Ascendency and Might—Hands who will arise to win victory for this Youth and who will purge mankind from the defilement of the outcast and the ungodly. These Hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the self-subsistent, the mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth. They will enter the cities and will inspire with fear the hearts of all their inhabitants. Such are the evidences of the might of God; how fearful, how vehement is His might!" (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 109, 110)

This race of men raised up by an act of God's will, who will serve as God's Hands of ascendency and might, can be recognized as identical with those spoken of by Christ as "angels" who shall cast the offenders into a "furnace of fire."

Last, but not least, is another requirement for one to be eligible to the Kingdom of God. Quoting from the words of Christ:

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Mark 10:15 "Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

More light on this subject, from the source of all light is taken from an address given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on April 24, 1912 at a children's reception, Studio Hall, 1219 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C.:

"Today illumined and spiritual children are gathered in this meeting. They are the children of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is for such souls as these, for they are near to God. They have pure hearts. They have spiritual faces. The effect of the divine teachings is manifest in the perfect purity of their hearts. That is why His Highness Christ has addressed the world, saying 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom'; that is, men must become pure in heart to know God. The teachings have had great effect. Spiritual souls! Tender souls! The hearts of all children are of the utmost purity. They are mirrors upon which no dust has fallen. But this purity is on account of weakness and innocence, not on account of any strength and testing, for as this is the early period of their childhood their hearts and minds are unsullied by the world. They cannot display any great intelligence. They have neither hypocrisy nor deceit. This is on account of the child's weakness whereas the man becomes pure through his strength. Through the power of intelligence he becomes simple; through the great power of reason and understanding and not through the power of weakness, he becomes sincere. When he attains to the state of per-

fection he will receive these qualities; his heart becomes purified, his spirit enlightened, his soul is sensitized and tender; all through his great strength. This is the difference between the perfect man and the child. Both have the underlying qualities of simplicity and sincerity;—the child through the power of weakness and the man through the power of strength.” (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 50)

The following gives much food for thought:

Matt. 19:23 “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26. But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

We give below a few excerpts from the tongue of Power, Bahá'u'lláh, on the subject of material and spiritual riches:

“Know ye that by ‘the world’ is meant your unawareness of Him Who is your Maker, and your

absorption in aught else but Him. The 'life to come', on the other hand, signifieth the things that give you a safe approach to God, the All-Glorious, the Incomparable. Whatsoever deterreth you, in this Day, from loving God is nothing but the world. Flee it, that ye may be numbered with the blest. Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 276)

"Know ye in truth that wealth is a mighty barrier between the seeker and his desire, the lover and his beloved. The rich, but for a few, shall in no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of content and resignation. Well is it then with him, who, being rich, is not hindered by his riches from the eternal kingdom, nor deprived by them from imperishable dominion. By the most great name! The splendor of such a wealthy man shall illumine the dwellers of heaven even as the sun enlightens the people of the earth!" (*Persian Hidden Words*, no. 53)

"Some have regarded it as lawful to infringe on the integrity of the substance of their neighbor, and have made light of the injunction of God as pre-

scribed in His Book. Evil fall upon them, and the chastisement of God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, afflict them! By Him Who shineth above the Day Spring of sanctity! If the whole earth were to be converted into silver and gold, no man who can be said to have truly ascended into the heaven of faith and certitude would deign to regard it, much less to seize and keep it. . . .

“Verily I say : Incline your ears to My sweet voice, and sanctify yourselves from the defilement of your evil passions and corrupt desires. They who dwell within the tabernacle of God, and are established upon the seats of everlasting glory, will refuse, though they be dying of hunger, to stretch their hands and seize unlawfully the property of their neighbor, however vile and worthless he may be.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 297, 298, 299)

“If ye meet the abased or the down-trodden, turn not away disdainfully from them, for the King of Glory ever watcheth over them and surroundeth them with such tenderness as none can fathom except them that have suffered their wishes and desires to be merged in the Will of your Lord, the Gracious, the All-Wise. O ye rich ones of the earth! Flee not from the face of the poor that lieth in the dust, nay rather befriend him and suffer him to recount the tale of the woes with which God's inscrutable Decree hath caused him to be afflicted. By the righteousness of God! Whilst ye consort with him, the Concourse on high will be looking upon you, will be interceding for you, will be extolling your names and glorifying your action. Blessed are the learned that pride not themselves on their attainments; and well is it with

the righteous that mock not the sinful, but rather conceal their misdeeds, so that their own shortcomings may remain unveiled to men's eyes." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 314, 315)

"Those men who, having amassed the vanities and ornaments of the earth, have turned away disdainfully from God—these have lost both this world and the world to come. Ere long, will God, with the Hand of Power, strip them of their possessions, and divest them of the robe of His bounty. To this they themselves shall soon witness." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 209)

CHAPTER 35

A CHANGED CREATION

Psalms 102:25 "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands.

26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.

27. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

"Children of thy servants" refers to the followers of the Manifestations of God who have appeared from the beginning of creation which hath no beginning, and will continue to manifest to the end that hath no end.

" 'Soon,' Bahá'u'lláh's own words proclaim, 'will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth and is the Knower of things unseen.' 'By Myself,' He solemnly asserts, 'the day is approaching when He will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new Order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful over all things.' 'The world's equilibrium,' He explains, 'hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this Most Great, this new

World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System, the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.' 'The signs of impending convulsions and chaos', He warns the peoples of the world, 'can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective'." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 161, 162)

The prophecies in the Bible often mention a time when the tares will be separated from the wheat and burned, and the wicked separated from the righteous. The results of such purging must necessarily bring about a very great change in the world as we know it.

Matt: 13:30 "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

This separation of the tares from the wheat, is now in process, as described by the mighty pen of Bahá'u'lláh:

"By Him Who is the Great Announcement! The All-Merciful is come invested with undoubted sovereignty. The Balance hath been appointed, and all them that dwell on earth have been gathered together. The Trumpet hath been blown, and lo, all eyes have stared up with terror, and the hearts of all who are in the heavens and on the earth have trembled, except them whom the breath of the verses of

God hath quickened, and who have detached themselves from all things.

“This is the Day whereon the earth shall tell out her tidings. The workers of iniquity are her burdens, could ye but perceive it.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 40)

How nearly this parallels the prophecies of the Bible, thus :

Matt. 7:23 “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

“The moon of idle fancy hath been cleft, and the heaven hath given out a palpable smoke. [Rev. 8:4 & Rev. 9:2] We see the people laid low, awed with the dread of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. The Crier hath cried out, and men have been torn away, so great hath been the fury of His wrath. The people of the left hand sigh and bemoan. The people of the right abide in noble habitations: they quaff the Wine that is life indeed, from the hands of the All Merciful, and are verily, the blissful.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 40, 41)

Christ gave a similar description of conditions which would exist at the time of the separation of the wicked from the righteous.

Matt. 25:31 “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory.

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32. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The potent pen of Bahá'u'lláh continues, bringing to light the fulfillment of the Bible verse, immediately following:

"The earth hath been shaken, and the mountains have passed away, and the angels have appeared, rank on rank before us."

John 1:51 "And he said unto him, verily, verily I say unto you. Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Continuing, Bahá'u'lláh's description of present-day conditions, written so many years ago, can now be easily understood by those who observe the evidences revealed daily:

"Most of the people are bewildered in their drunkenness and wear on their faces the evidences of anger. Thus have We gathered together the workers of iniquity. [These are the tares which are first gathered into bundles and burned.] We see them rushing on toward their idol. Say: None shall be se-

cure this Day from the decree of God. This indeed is a grievous Day. We point out to them those that led them astray. They see them, and yet recognize them not. . . .

"Say: The heavens have been folded together, and the earth is held within His grasp, and the corrupt doers have been held by their forelock, and still they understand not. They drink of the tainted water, and know it not. Say: The shout hath been raised, and the people have come forth from their graves, and arising are gazing around them. Some have made haste to attain the court of the God of Mercy, others have fallen down on their faces in the fire of Hell while still others are lost in bewilderment. The verses of God have been revealed, and yet they have turned away from them. His proof hath been manifested, and yet they are unaware of it. And when they behold the face of the All-Merciful, their own faces are saddened, while they are disporting themselves. They hasten forward to Hell Fire, and mistake it for light. Far from God be what they fondly imagine!" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 41, 42)

All must realize that this great change which has come has taken man beyond the old era of Divine Grace where confession of faith by word of mouth was sufficient for salvation, and into the advent of Divine Justice where faith will be expressed by deeds, when every command of God will be obeyed. Thus is fulfilled another prophecy, which has been sung and repeated for thousands of years, but not consummated until now:

Psalms 1:5 “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

“Say: Whether ye rejoice or whether ye burst for fury, the heavens are cleft asunder, and God hath come down, invested with radiant sovereignty. All created things are heard exclaiming: ‘The Kingdom is God’s, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise’.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, page 42)

CHAPTER 36

CAN HUMAN NATURE CHANGE?

1 Cor. 15:51 "Behold I shew you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

In the limited human sphere of education and knowledge, it is thought that human nature is unchangeable, but the wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá conforms with the above Bible prophecy, showing the accuracy with which His teachings tally with the Bible, while at the same time bringing into agreement both science and religion:

"Education and religion are alike based on the assumption that it is possible to change human nature. In fact, it requires but little investigation to show that the one thing we can say with certainty about any living thing is that it cannot keep from changing. Without change there can be no life. Even the mineral cannot resist change, and the higher we go in the scale of being, the more varied, complex, and wonderful do the changes become. Moreover, in progress and development among creatures of all

grades we find two kinds of change—one slow, gradual, often almost imperceptible; and the other rapid, sudden and dramatic. The latter occur at what are called ‘critical stages’ of development. In the case of minerals we find such critical stages at the melting and boiling points, for example, when the solid suddenly becomes a liquid or the liquid becomes a gas. In the case of plants we see such critical stages when the seed begins to germinate, or the bud bursts into leaf. In the animal world we see the same on every hand, as when the grub suddenly changes into a butterfly, the chick emerges from its shell, or the babe is born from its mother’s womb. In the higher life of the soul we often see a similar transformation, when a man is ‘born again’ and his whole being becomes radically changed in its aims, its character and activities. Such critical stages often affect a whole species or multitude of species simultaneously, as when vegetation of all kinds suddenly bursts into new life in spring-time.

“Bahá’u’lláh declares that just as lesser living things have times of sudden emergence into new and fuller life, so for mankind also a ‘critical stage’, a time of ‘re-birth’, is at hand. Then modes of life which have persisted from the dawn of history up till now will be quickly, irrevocably, altered, and humanity enter on a new phase of life as different from the old as the butterfly is different from the caterpillar, or the bird from the egg. Mankind as a whole, in the light of new Revelation, will attain to a new vision of truth; as a whole country is illumined when the sun rises, so that all men see clearly, where but an hour before everything was dark and dim. ‘This is a new cycle of human power’,

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says 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a rose-garden and a paradise.' The analogies of nature are all in favor of such a view; the prophets of old have with one accord foretold the advent of such a glorious day; the signs of the times show clearly that profound and revolutionary changes in human ideas and institutions are even now in progress. What could be more futile and baseless therefore, than the pessimistic argument that, although all things else change, human nature cannot change?" (*Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, pages 145, 146, 147)

11 Cor. 3:18 "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

This "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord" is defined in the Bahá'í teachings as the reflection of the attributes of God, similar to the reflection of the sun in a clear mirror. The sun does not descend into the mirror, but is reflected therein so that by looking into the mirror, the sun can be seen, just as the "open faces" of believers mirror forth various attributes of divinity, with a glory bestowed by the spirit of the Lord, and which may be changed in the twinkling of an eye into even greater glory.

"Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner

life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestation would be apparent'." (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 25)

Isaiah 61:11 "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations."

God does not bestow the blessings of a changed nature upon those who do not desire it. The desire for this bounty and favor of God is demonstrated by cooperation with and obedience to divine guidance. The Herald sent from the City of God to earth is capable of quickening men to new life and of awakening souls into a consciousness of higher realms of being, into which corruption cannot enter. This is better expressed by the words of the Divine Herald Himself:

"Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. At that hour will the Mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the

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spirit from the slumber of heedlessness. Then will the manifold favors and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and the evidences of an everlasting Manifestation." (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 267)

CHAPTER 37

TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

Rev. 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2. And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"The Law of God is compared to an adorned bride who appears with most beautiful ornaments." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 78)

"The Law of God is also described as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. It is evident that the New Jerusalem which descends from heaven is not a city of stone, mortar, bricks, earth and wood. It is the Law of God which descends from heaven and is called new; for it is clear that the Jerusalem which is stone and earth does not descend from heaven, and that it is not renewed; but that which is renewed is the Law of God." (*Some Answered Questions*, page 78)

Continuing with the prophecy:

Rev. 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with

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men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

"This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: 'Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of Thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne.' The realm of glory exclaimeth: 'Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His Name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.'" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 30, 31)

Rev. 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto us, Write; for these words are true and faithful."

The above reference to "no more death" does not refer to physical death, as all things composed of atoms in the physical realm are subject to decomposition, or change, which is known as physical death, but it refers to no more "death" of the soul. The idea of no more sorrow or pain may be incomprehensible at present, but all things are possible with God.

As the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, has explained in the following quotation, during the period im-

mediately preceding the quick transition from the old into the new condition, we cannot grasp its full import:

“To claim to have grasped all the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's prodigious scheme for world-wide human solidarity, or to have fathomed its import, would be presumptuous on the part of even the declared supporters of His Faith. To attempt to visualize it in all its possibilities, to estimate its future benefits, to picture its glory, would be premature at even so advanced a stage in the evolution of mankind.” (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 34)

According to the Bible, it is declared that the Lord will reveal to man that which he has not previously seen, heard, or imagined:

1 Cor. 2:9 “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

That the day of the fulfillment of this promise is approaching is definitely stated by Bahá'u'lláh:

“‘The heights,’ Bahá'u'lláh Himself testified, ‘which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men.’” (*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 168)

TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá reinforce faith and confidence in our Creator and Heavenly Father, by directing us not to look to our own strength and capacity, but rather to trust in the favor and bounties of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá counsels as follows:

“We must appreciate these things and strive in order that the utmost desire of the prophets may now be realized and all the glad-tidings be fulfilled. Trust in the favor of God. Look not at your own capacities, for the divine bestowal can transform a drop into an ocean; it can make a tiny seed a lofty tree. Verily divine bestowals are like the sea and we are the fishes of that sea. The fishes must not look at themselves; they must behold the ocean which is vast and wonderful. Provision for the sustenance of all is in this ocean. Therefore the divine bounties encompass all and love eternal shines upon all.”
(*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 127)

Joel tried to describe the larger capacity of human beings in the New Day of the Lord:

Joel 2:28 “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions;

29. And even upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit.”

The above prophecy, when it is fulfilled, will be the realization of the following desire of Moses:

Numbers 11:29 "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them."

It will be noticed that all credit and praise for this change in human nature is given to God, and not to His human creation, as man can do nothing of himself, except by praise and obedience to God. Isaiah declares that all will be righteous through the power of God, and thus praises Him.

Isaiah 60:21 "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

22. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

CHAPTER 38

SUMMARY

Isaiah 25:1 "O Lord, Thou art my God. I will exalt thee. I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy councils of old are faithfulness and truth.

3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify Thee, The city of the terrible nations shall fear Thee.

4. For Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

7. He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

8. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it.

9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God. We have waited for Him, and He will save us; This is our Lord; We have waited for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in His Salvation."

When the Lord speaks, it comes to pass. When God says "The Most Great Peace shall come," prepare for it; it will be accomplished. God is all-powerful. Although His followers be few, one with God is a majority. Anyone who fights against God's ordinances and commandments for this Golden Age will be defeated.

When God declares that the foundation of all religions is one, it is useless to carry on further antagonism with people on account of religious forms and dogmas. Men must come out of their graves, and become informed and awakened.

The object and end of religion is "The Most Great Peace." If this is impossible to establish, then the Bible is without purpose, as all of its prophecies describe this great era, and all of the commandments and instructions are given for this purpose. Why would peace be desired in heaven if there is not a similar desire on earth, for the human soul is connected with both heaven and earth at the same time and dwells in both places simultaneously. Although we have physical bodies, even now, we are living in eternity.

The world at this stage is in urgent need of God's guidance which has been provided. Mankind must choose between reliance upon finite limitation, ignorance and weakness, struggling under misdirected and ambitious leaders, and heed the infinite wisdom and sovereignty of the Creator of all things, both seen and unseen. The merciful, the gracious, the benevolent, the generous One has no motive in having His commands and behests obeyed except the happiness, advancement and love for His creation. This is expressed by the Manifestation of our Father in Heaven, Bahá'u'lláh, who lived on earth less than one hundred years ago:

"Who can ever believe that this Servant of God hath at any time cherished in His heart a desire

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for any earthly honor or benefit? The Cause associated with His Name is far above the transitory things of this world. Behold Him, an exile, a victim of tyranny, in this Most Great Prison. His enemies have assailed Him on every side, and will continue to do so till the end of His life. Whatever, therefore, He saith unto you is wholly for the sake of God, that haply the peoples of the earth may cleanse their hearts from the stain of evil desire, may rend its veil asunder, and attain unto the knowledge of the one true God—the most exalted station to which any man can aspire. Their belief or disbelief in My Cause can neither profit nor harm Me. We summon them wholly for the sake of God. He, verily, can afford to dispense with all creatures.” (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 85)

Although God can dispense with all creatures, these creatures cannot dispense with God, for in Him we live, move and have our being. “Ere long the world and all that is therein shall be as a thing forgotten, and all honor shall belong to the loved ones of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful” proclaims Bahá'u'lláh. Also, “Render thanks unto Him Who is the Desire of all worlds for having invested thee with such high honor.”

“Glory be to Thee, O God, for Thy manifestation of love to mankind! O Thou who art our life and light, guide Thy servants in Thy way, and make us rich in Thee and free from all save Thee.

“O God, teach us Thy oneness and give us a realization of Thy unity, that we may see no one

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save Thee. Thou art the Merciful and the Giver of bounty!

“O God, create in the hearts of Thy beloved the fire of Thy love, that it may consume the thought of everything save Thee.

“Reveal to us, O God, Thine exalted eternity—that Thou hast ever been and wilt ever be, and that there is no God save Thee.

“Verily, in Thee will we find comfort and strength!”

Bahá'u'lláh.

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